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THE
CLAIMS OF THE PRIESTHOOD
CONSIDERED.

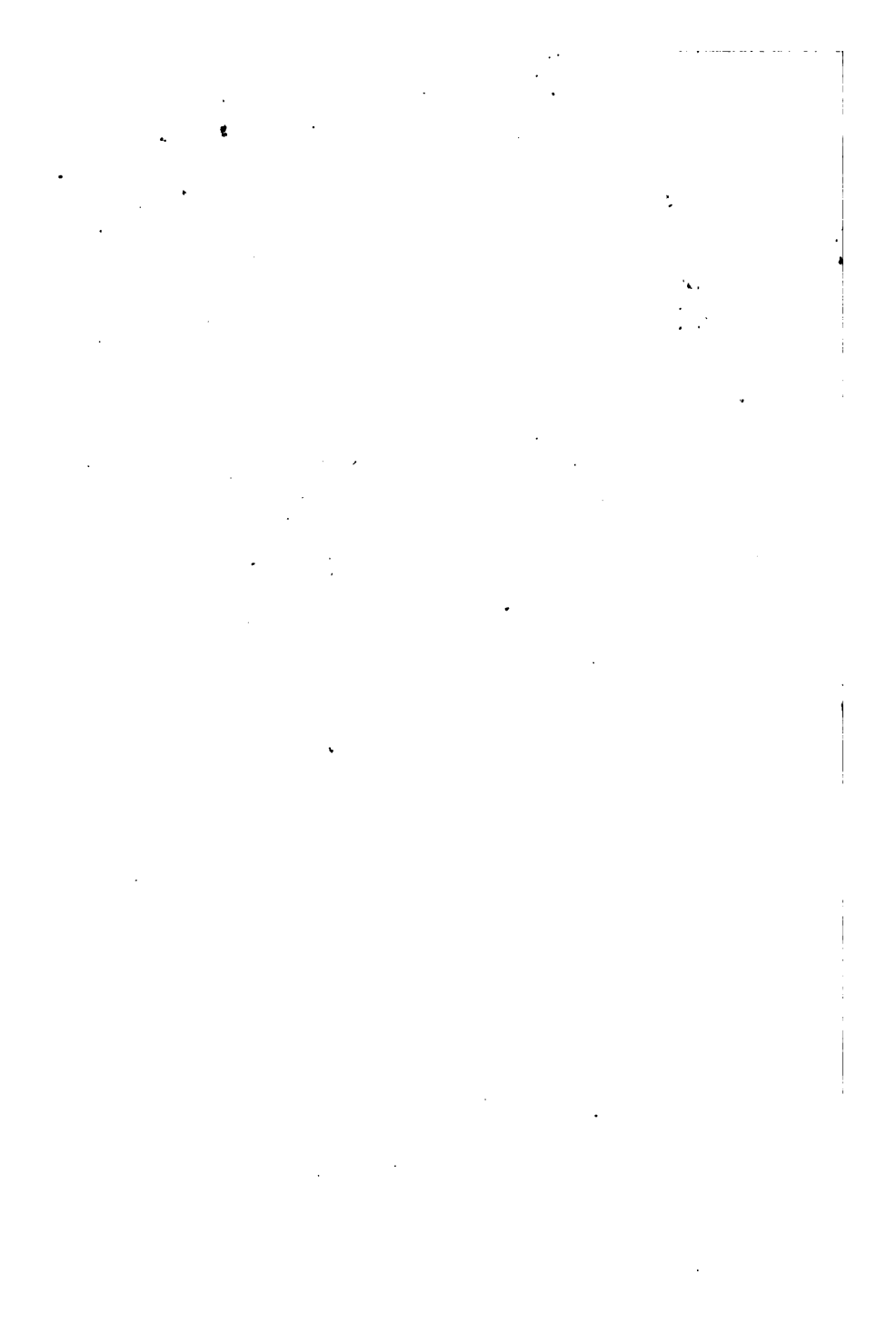
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THE
CLAIMS OF THE PRIESTHOOD
CONSIDERED.

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PREFACE.

IN the first four chapters of the following treatise a general statement is made of the extent to which human ministrations are employed in the service of religion. In the succeeding chapters enquiry is made into the qualifications necessary for the efficient exercise of these ministrations. I cannot venture to hope that the views here put forth will meet with the entire approval of either of the two great schools of opinion into which, for the most part, the Church of this country is divided. To the one I shall appear to lay too much stress upon the Church and her ordinances; to the other I shall appear to underrate the qualifications requisite for the due representation of the Church, and for the efficient administration of her ordinances. I can only say that the conclusion at which I have arrived is the result of a long and careful attention to the subject, in the course of which I have been led to modify

many opinions respecting it formerly entertained by me.

In the exercise of that liberty of judgment which, in Chapter IX. of this treatise, I have claimed as the common inheritance of every Christian, I have freely criticised some passages in the Charge recently delivered by my own Diocesan, the Bishop of Salisbury. But I should be very sorry indeed to be thought guilty of the least disrespect towards one who is most justly entitled to the affection and veneration of all who know him.

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CHAPTER I.

HUMAN MINISTRATIONS, PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND MORAL.

IF we look back upon the successive stages in our life through which we have passed before arriving at the full and free exercise of all our faculties, we cannot fail to be struck with the variety of ways in which we have been indebted to the agency and assistance of our fellow-creatures.

1. But for them we should never have even entered upon this life, which, so far as we know, constitutes the only introduction to the life which lies beyond it. And for no small proportion of our whole earthly life, we remained entirely indebted to those around us for the supply of everything on which life depends. Even after we have arrived at the full maturity and activity of our physical powers we still remain indebted to others, if not for the actual necessities of life, yet for almost everything which helps to make life comfortable and en-

joyable. And we must each of us look forward to a time when we shall be constrained to fall back upon the assistance which for a while we are enabled to dispense with, in the event of our outliving the freshness of our bodily constitution, or of our falling a victim to any one of the numerous forms of accident and disease by which we are at every moment surrounded and threatened.

2. Again, if from the physical we turn to the intellectual department of our nature, we shall find exactly the same need exemplified, if possible, on a still larger scale. It has been asserted, and with every appearance of truth, that there is no known instance of a nation raising itself, by its own unaided efforts, from the savage state into a state of civilization and refinement. And what is thus asserted of whole nations is most undoubtedly true when asserted of individuals. But for the presence and assistance of other minds it is impossible to conceive the case of a mind lifting itself up through each successive gradation into that state of mental development which alone can entitle it to take rank as an intelligent creature. And after we have arrived at this state we continue to receive daily

and hourly supplies from the minds of our fellow-men, alike in the shape of direct communications from those about us, and indirectly from those who are at a distance from us.

3. Even if we regard man simply with reference to his present state of existence, the first place in his constitution will be undoubtedly assigned to that department of it which, using the word in its widest acceptation is called moral*. But if we further regard him with reference to the state of existence which awaits him hereafter, this moral department of his nature presents itself to us as the basis on which this future life is to be reared, and the germ out of which it is to be evolved. And in whichever of these two aspects we regard him, we shall recognise exactly the same need of the presence and co-operation of those kindred moral powers which alone can awaken his dormant energies, and sustain and guide them when awakened.

And the fact of the employment of human agency in so high a service may be fairly re-

* I have here made the term "moral" embrace those highest faculties and instincts of our nature which, in chap. ii. of my treatise on "Historical Religion," I have called "spiritual."

garded as suggestive of the employment of the same agency on service of, if possible, a still higher character; at all events, must completely remove all ground for objection to such an employment.

4. So far we have considered the ministrations rendered by one human being to another, chiefly as they contribute to the subsistence and development of each of us in turn regarded simply as individuals. And were the tendency of our nature like that of some of the lower animals, towards a solitary life, we should still stand in need of these ministrations so far as they helped to promote the first growth and exercise of the faculties which were to enable us to set up an independent existence, each one for himself in after years.

But it needs no argument to prove that the whole bent and bias of our nature is towards a social and not a solitary state of existence. The family into which we are born, and in the midst of which we are reared, points unmistakeably forwards to the various gradations of social life, which finally terminate in the state. And many of our strongest and noblest feelings and faculties imperatively demand the social

state as the only one in which they can find the scope and breadth necessary for their exercise, and indeed for their very existence. And as we take into account this social tendency of our nature, we recognise a thousand additional ways in which the ministration of man to his fellow man is called into action. Nor is it by those alone who form part of the same generation with ourselves, that these ministrations are rendered. It is, indeed, difficult to say whether we owe most to those with whom we are most nearly and closely connected, or to those who have lived and left this life before our entrance into it, and who have bequeathed to us the rich inheritance of their examples and achievements. It would be no overcharged picture, but a simple delineation of fact, to describe human society as embracing not only those who at any given moment are found occupying the surface of the globe, but all those also who in their turn have ever helped to occupy it, and have thus, each in their manner and degree, contributed to swell the collective sum of ministrations rendered by one human being to another.

CHAPTER II.

HUMAN MINISTRATIONS INTRODUCTORY TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

1. **T**HE Christian religion is based on the assumption that our only access to God, our only entrance upon the highest phase of which our life is capable, lies through the person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And this means of approach to God through Jesus Christ, this life in Him, is described in Scripture* as consisting in His human, still more emphatically than in His divine nature. It is through His human nature that we are enabled to comprehend and lay hold of His divine nature.

2. It is not given to us to discover in this life the many ways in which the great mediatorial work of Jesus Christ is employed for the benefit of the whole human race, and it may be for the benefit also of other departments of God's creation. And it would be presumptuous in us to speculate upon the future condition of those, and they constitute by far the largest portion of

* 1 Tim. ii. 5.

mankind, who have lived and died in entire ignorance of the event, which of all that ever happened in this world's history most nearly concerns them. Still it is evident that in order to our becoming Christians in the ordinary and proper sense of the term, it is necessary not only that Jesus Christ should have died and risen again for us, but that we also on our part should have consciously apprehended these great events in their main significance, and that we should further have entered into a state of conscious relation to Him in whom these events were realized. And the special faculty of our nature by which we are enabled to enter upon the necessary relation to Jesus Christ, and to appropriate His work to ourselves, is Faith. It is unnecessary to attempt the definition of this, the highest and perhaps the most highly complicated of all our faculties, or to attempt to measure the vast importance which Scripture and our own experience concur in assigning to it. We have here only to consider the particular means by which this faculty is enabled to enter upon the sphere allotted to it, and to perform the work there set before it. Now, however spiritual faith is in its own essence, it is clearly requisite that

it should be invested with so much of an intellectual character as should suffice to bring it into relation with the objects with which it has to deal. And a certain amount of human ministration is, in the first instance, required in order to raise the intellect itself into that stage of growth and exercise which will enable it to recognise the meaning and importance of the great truths of Christianity, supposing them to be ever so clearly presented to it, it might be added, in order to raise the soul itself into that stage of development which is to enable it to become conscious of the need of the salvation so freely offered to it. But, what is even more to our present purpose, it is further requisite that the intellect, when thus matured, should be supplied from sources and through channels quite external to itself, with the knowledge of those objects which it is utterly unable to develop from its own resources.

Faith cometh by hearing, but without hearing, or some similar and equivalent mental process, faith cannot come.

3. It ought to need no argument to prove that the Bible forms the source from which all such information must, to us at least of the present

day, be ultimately derived. I have elsewhere^b adverted to the extent to which human agency is manifested in the delivery of God's revelation to man. It is, indeed, only through the medium of its human form that we are enabled to gain access to its Divine contents. And thus, in God's Word contained in Scripture, we have a most remarkable instance of the employment of that human agency in the service of our religion, which exhibits itself to us in its culminating point in the person of Jesus Christ. As our approach to God the Father lies through the person of Jesus Christ, and as the Divine nature of Jesus Christ is approached through the medium of His human nature, so too our only means of first entering into relation with Jesus Christ, is supplied to us by that Word which is at once human and Divine, and whose Divine authority comes to us through the word spoken or written of man.

4. But the mere fact of the Bible having been once spoken or written, is not enough to ensure our own acquaintance with it. There is the same need, as I have insisted on at length elsewhere^c, of human agency, only on a lower level, for the purpose of diffusing the Bible over those

^b See "Biblical Revelation," ch. iii.

^c *Ibid.*, ch. iv.

parts of the world where it is not previously known, for transmitting it from generation to generation of believers, and for unfolding and interpreting its contents to the expanding minds of each generation in succession. At the same time, in thus insisting on the need of the ministration of one human being to another, I would not for a moment be supposed to say anything in derogation of that Holy Spirit which whether we regard it as the original inspirer of those men to whom God's revelation was delivered, or as perpetually employed in preparing the hearts of men for receiving this revelation, ever exhibits itself to us as the one motive power which alone can make these inferior agencies contribute their share towards the great work of our salvation. Still, just as God has so ordered it that the material world around us should be indispensable to our present state of existence, just as the life and activity of our minds is made to depend upon that of our bodies, so too, it is equally a part of the same great plan, that our life in heaven should be made dependent upon our life on earth, and in it upon all those agencies which help to minister to this our earthly state of existence.

Indeed, it is precisely under cover of these subordinate agencies that the great work of the Holy Spirit in the world is carried on. It is through the influence of one human being upon another, that the Holy Spirit has always displayed the fullest manifestation of its power. We have only to look at the marvellous effects of preaching, especially in the first and truest sense of the word, that, namely, of proclaiming the name of Jesus Christ to those who have not previously heard it, in order to appreciate the amazing extent to which one human being may be made instrumental to the spiritual good of all around him.

5. Though faith is always insisted on in Scripture as the faculty by which we lay hold of Jesus Christ, and appropriate to ourselves the great work which He has performed for us, we must not overlook the statements most emphatically announced to us by the same authority^d, that in order to our full entrance upon our new life we must avail ourselves of certain divinely appointed ordinances, the foremost place amongst which is occupied by the Sacrament of Baptism. Every

^d Matt. xxviii. 19; John iii. 5; Acts ii. 38, and xxii. 16; Titus iii. 5.

believer is called upon to make a profession of his faith in Jesus Christ by being baptized into His Name. But further, this ordinance is spoken of in Scripture not merely as a channel for the profession of our faith, but also as a seal and confirmation of it, and likewise as a means for the remission of sins committed previously to our reception of it. It may be, and no doubt is true, that the efficacy of Baptism depends entirely, in the case of adults at least, upon the state of heart which accompanies its reception. Still, be the faith of the convert ever so vivid, there remains the further need of the reception of this Sacrament, and that not simply as a means for the external profession of faith, but as a divinely appointed channel for the conveyance of special gifts and graces.

The Sacrament of Baptism may, therefore, be looked upon as a medium which is required in order to complete our entrance upon the new life in Jesus Christ. And it may be so looked upon first in consideration of the material of which it is composed, and secondly in consideration of the person by whom it is administered. Under the first of these may be classed the form of words with which it is directed to be administered, upon

which, however, it is unnecessary here to dwell. As regards the use of water as an essential part of the ordinance, it may be observed that not only does the washing of the body afford a most fitting symbol of the cleansing of the soul, but it also appears to advance a direct claim on behalf of the body to a share in the new life purchased for us by Jesus Christ.

We must remember that as the great work of Jesus Christ's redemption was accomplished, in part at least, through the medium of His bodily acts and sufferings, so it was for the bodies as well as for the souls of men, for those bodies which are to rise again from the dead, as well as for those souls which are never to die, that this great work was accomplished. And as in order to the full life and activity of our souls, that of our bodies is imperatively demanded, so we may believe something of the same kind of relation to subsist between the two parts of which the Sacrament of Baptism is compounded, parts which consequently we ought no more to divorce from one another than to seek a separate existence for the soul apart from the body, or to claim the full benefit of our Saviour's redemption from His divine apart from His human nature, or from the soul

alone of His human nature apart from the body. And if the objection be urged that the cleansing of the body by water carries with it no permanent efficacy, we may reply by applying the same objection to the employment by Jesus Christ in many of His miraculous cures of the same material elements*, which yet, however inefficacious in themselves, proved under His blessing the instruments of His healing power.

But secondly, we may look upon the Sacrament of Baptism as a medium for our entrance upon our new life in Jesus Christ in reference to the person by whom it is administered. It is clearly essential to the Sacrament, as originally ordained by Jesus Christ, that it should be administered to the convert by some person other than himself. Nor ought it to require any argument to prove that the person thus administering must himself have been baptized previously. And thus, then, we see that by Jesus Christ's own ordinance the instrumentality of one of our fellow-creatures is a second time required in order to enable us to enter upon our new life in Jesus Christ Himself.

Whilst, however, Scripture obliges us to insist

* Mark vii. 33; John ix. 6.

upon the reception of this Sacrament as requisite to the completion of our new birth in Christ, it equally forces us to abstain from insisting upon baptism as indispensable to our new life, in the same sense in which faith is so. Without faith in Jesus Christ it is quite impossible to be a Christian, in the full acceptation of the term, but we cannot go the length of asserting thus much with respect to baptism. In spite of some statements of Scripture, which, taken by themselves, might seem to indicate a stricter view, the principle has been always recognised by the Church, and probably has never been disputed by any Christian, that in cases where, from some hindrance not of the believer's own raising, his faith has failed of being ratified and confirmed by the seal of baptism, it alone may be regarded as a sufficient pledge of his full entrance upon the Christian life. If, however, it is sought to be thence inferred that, in order to bring about the necessary relation between each individual and his Saviour, the use of human ministration is capable of being altogether dispensed with, we have only to fall back upon the instance of faith itself, which requires to be

based on a knowledge of events, in order to arrive at which, human ministration remains just as indispensable as ever.

6. We have now adverted to two ways in which the Sacrament of Baptism may be looked upon as a medium by which our relation to Jesus Christ is in part completed. But there is also a third aspect under which it may likewise be so regarded. By our baptism we are not only grafted into a new life in Jesus Christ, but also into a new life in one another. We are introduced into a new state, not only of individual but also of social existence, and this social life in which we find ourselves placed as Christians, is in strict keeping with that to which we are led by the tendencies of our own nature. Our religious life is reared upon the same foundation, depends upon the same kind of mutual assistance, only purified and elevated, as our natural life does, and is it wonderful that, in order to our first entrance upon our new life, the same kind of instrumentality should be requisite as that which is requisite to our entrance upon our natural life?

It is, then, as fellow-members together of one

body that we have one, and that the most special means of intercourse with Him who forms its Head. And thus to a certain, and no insignificant, extent the whole body of Christian believers may be looked upon as constituting a medium by which each individual member of the body may in turn obtain access to its divine Head, and the importance of this our fellowship with one another is rated by St. John as only second to that of our fellowship with Jesus Christ Himself^f.

It may indeed be objected, that the existence of such a medium as that of the whole body of Christian believers, is liable to become a hindrance to our individual movements rather than an assistance to them. But so also the same objection may be raised against the employment of the body in the service of the mind, and to the employment of both body and mind in the service of religion. But it is in the use and not in the abuse of a principle that the principle itself is to be studied; and so long as we observe the due order and proportion of each of the means of grace, we need not apprehend the forfeiture of our closeness of standing to Him, by

^f 1 John i. 7.

whom the use of these ministrations was enjoined.

Briefly to sum up the results at which we have arrived in this chapter. We have seen that as Jesus Christ is the one sole channel by which we have access to the Father, so, too, it is especially through the human nature of Jesus Christ that we are enabled to gain access to His Divine nature. Again, as in order to our apprehension of Jesus Christ and His work, we stand in need of faith, so this faith itself stands in need of the Word of God, which again has to be administered to us through various degrees and kinds of human agency. Lastly, Jesus Christ has Himself appointed the Sacrament of Baptism for the purpose of ratifying and confirming the union with Him which is begun in repentance and faith. And each individual believer in Jesus Christ is also closely associated with the whole body of believers of which, in their joint capacity, Jesus Christ Himself is the Head. And it is as limbs of this one body, even more emphatically than as individually related to Christ, that we are invited to draw near to God and to expect to receive blessings from Him. And in each one of these

several means of access to God through Jesus Christ we stand in need of the application of the same principle of human agency in a subordinate form, of which His mediation forms the culminating example.

CHAPTER III.

HUMAN MINISTRATIONS CONFIRMATIVE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

IN the preceding chapter we considered those ministrations of man to his fellow-man which are most instrumental in giving birth to the new life. We have next to consider those which are most instrumental in sustaining and promoting the life thus commenced.

1. As our first entrance upon the new life lies solely through the person of our Saviour Jesus Christ, so it is from Him that all the supplies necessary for our after support and growth in it must be continually drawn. And let us again turn our attention to the fact that it is through the human nature of Jesus Christ that we are enabled to gain access to the Divine nature which lies within it and beyond it.

2. Further, as it is by faith in Jesus Christ that we first enter into a state of conscious relation to Him, so it is by faith only kindled into the still higher grace of love that the relation thus effected has to be maintained and promoted.

3. It might indeed be supposed that so soon as faith had once obtained a view of Jesus Christ and His great work, the use of all subordinate helps would from that moment forward be entirely dispensed with. Once placed within the sphere of the divine attraction, we might expect to see faith drawn daily nearer and nearer to its object, until at length it became entirely absorbed in it. But however strong a tendency there may be towards such a result, we do not as a matter of fact see the forward and upward movement of the new life once commenced left to faith alone. There are still various external means provided for sustaining and helping it on its heavenly way, and the same clue of human agency is traceable alike through all. And the first place in the series of these agencies is occupied by the Christian family.

Attention has already been called to the way in which the circumstances and conditions of our nature form the basis upon which the whole fabric of the Christian edifice is laid and reared. We make our first entrance into life in a state of the most entire helplessness and ignorance, a helplessness and an ignorance which are only gradually removed as our dormant faculties of

body and mind are awakened to exercise, and toward the awakening of which a special external influence is required. And as we find the demand thus made specially supplied by nature herself in the home and family into which we are born, so it is in strict accordance with this natural provision, and indeed based upon it, that of all the helps provided for the growth and activity of the new life, the Christian family is the first and the strongest. It is from the fire of the domestic hearth that that of the altar itself is chiefly kindled; and the extent of divine sanction conferred upon this arrangement and provision of our nature may be gathered alike from the home-life of our blessed Lord Himself, and secondly, and even more forcibly, from the names—all borrowed from the relation in which one member of a family stands to another—by which God Himself has deigned to express the relation in which we stand towards Him, nay, even that which subsists between Himself and our Saviour. It is unnecessary to discuss the precise period of life at which conscious relation of the soul to Jesus Christ may be said to commence. There can be no doubt, however, that it dates from a very early period, a period when the utmost

care is required on the part of those into whose charge the child-believer is given, in order to promote the relation thus commenced, and to avert as far as possible every circumstance which may threaten to pervert it or to retard it.

4. From the ministration supplied in the Christian family, let us pass on to that to which it naturally introduces us, the ordinance of Confirmation. Confirmation may be looked upon as marking the transition from the training and guiding influence of home-life to the self-reliance and independent exertion of manhood. And it is immaterial whether we regard this ordinance most in the light of a termination of that stage of life of which infant baptism may be fitly said to form the commencement, and between which two points the connecting line is supplied by the Christian family, or whether we regard it as marking the commencement of the stage of adult Christian life, and thus as supplying a special introduction to the Sacrament of the Holy Communion. In each case Confirmation occupies precisely the same place in the series of human ministrations provided for the growth and confirmation of the Christian life.

5. As the Sacrament of Baptism administered

but once is instrumental to the once occurring birth into our life in Jesus Christ, so in the constantly recurring Sacrament of the Holy Communion of Christ's Body and Blood we find an ever-fresh supply of the Divine food by which the life thus commenced requires to be continually strengthened and provided. Further, in the Sacrament of the Holy Communion, as in that of Baptism, there is observable the same employment of a material vehicle for the conveyance of Divine grace, the same need of administration by the hands of our fellow-men, and fellow-Christians, (whether with any additional limitation we shall enquire hereafter,) the same communion effected or promoted with all our fellow-believers, who, from having been once baptized into one body, are henceforth invited to renew and strengthen that union by continually partaking of the one bread.

And on each and all of these points the Sacrament of the Holy Communion furnishes us with a most striking instance of the employment of human ministrations in the divine service, though, notwithstanding the plain intimations of our Lord and of His Apostles, that this Sacrament, like that of Baptism, is to be regarded by us as an in-

dispensable means of grace, the same allowance has ever been freely accorded in the case of those who have been prevented from partaking of the Sacrament, and have had in consequence to fall back upon the still more indispensable resource provided in faith.

6. Amongst the remaining ministrations most directly tending to uphold or advance the new life within us, we must for the second time turn our attention to the Holy Scriptures. And it is very useful to discriminate between the use of the Scriptures as the source from which our first knowledge of the great truths of our religion has to be at least ultimately derived, and as the source from which that knowledge, once obtained, has to be constantly refreshed and developed.

7. At a far lower level, indeed, but presenting still more unmistakeable examples of the employment of the same law of agency, may be placed the writings of the many great and good men who have lived before us, and who have left us the rich inheritance of their minds and hearts. There is something most wonderful, almost awful, in the direct personal contact into which we are thus brought with those who have left this world, it may be ages and ages before

our first entrance into it. And without dilating on the various ways in which the minds of our fellow-men, embalmed and presented to generation after generation of their fellow-men in all their first freshness and beauty, may be made instrumental to the promotion of the new life within us, let us especially notice the stores of help amassed in the hymns and more strictly devotional writings placed within the reach of every Christian.

8. Next to the study of God's Word and to the reflexion of it in various points as we see it exhibited to us in the writings of our fellow-Christians, let us advert to the help provided for us in the common prayers of the Church, in which we are especially invited to join in our capacity of members of Christ's body, with the especial promise of our great Head, that "where two or three are gathered together in His Name, there He is in the midst of them."

9. To the common prayers and praises of the Church, we must subjoin preaching in the second sense of the word, viz. that of unfolding the truths of Scripture and of enforcing them on the minds and hearts of those who are already believers. And it is impossible to dispute the

vast extent to which the cause of religion is indebted to those whom the Holy Spirit stirs up in every age to the edification, in the full sense of the term, of the body of Christ.

10. And lastly, let us notice the various indirect ways in which each Christian may minister to the spiritual welfare of all around him, as by his sympathy, his advice, and, above all, by his example and by his prayers.

And as in each of the instances adduced in this and the previous chapters we recognise man employed in ministering to his fellow-man, so we may also observe a close similarity between those of his ministrations which promote the life of his fellow-men in their capacity of members of the civil or social community, and those which promote the life of them in their capacity of fellow-members of Christ's body, the Church.

And if it be objected that there is a plain tendency in some, at least, of these ministrations, to lead us to rely too much on what is done for us, and to think too little of what is required of ourselves, we shall find precisely the same objection raised and dismissed by the great Apostle in the case of the great human ministration of

all,—the mediation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ^a. But as this great work, so far from dispensing with our own exertions, only calls us to increased efforts in the work of our salvation, so the same may be said in its degree with reference to each of those subordinate ministrations which form the subjects of these chapters.

^a Rom. vi.

CHAPTER IV.

HUMAN MINISTRATIONS RESTORATIVE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

WE have now touched upon the chief of the ministrations rendered by one Christian to another, which are, by God's own ordinance, instrumental either in raising us into our new life, or in promoting our growth and progress in it.

But besides making provisions for putting us into the right way and for guiding us along it, our religion also contains a series of provisions for restoring us into the right way in case of our wandering from it.

1. "My little children," says St. John^a, writing to those who were already believers in Jesus Christ, "these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins," &c., that is, for sins committed since our entrance

^a 1 John ii. 1.

upon our new life, as well as for those committed previously to our entrance upon it. And thus we find ourselves introduced for the third time to Jesus Christ, and that in His human, still more directly than in His divine nature, as occupying, in His character of Advocate on behalf of erring believers, the same place at the head of this as of each of the other departments of human ministration.

Nor is it merely for extraordinary cases that this advocacy is provided; on the contrary, the same Apostle from whom we have just quoted, plainly intimates in another place of the same Epistle that every believer will have frequent occasion for availing himself of the assistance here offered to him: "If we^b" (believers in Christ) "say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us: but if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

And in the case of such confession being prompted by our own hearts and carried into effect by our own unaided exertions, there cannot be the slightest reason to doubt that it will be

^b 1 John i. 8, 9.

at once available, without the need of any further agency, for, the remission of our sins, through the merits of the propitiation which has been made for them by Jesus Christ.

2. But besides keeping the door ever open for the spontaneous return of those who have wandered from the right way, we shall also find a series of provisions made in our religion for inducing a return into the right way by external means in the case of those who do not seek it of their own accord. The first in this series which offers itself to our notice is intercession; and of all the ways in which our great High-Priest enjoins us, each in our respective sphere, to imitate the great work which He performs for us above, this work of intercession, as offered by one Christian for another, still more as offered by the whole Church for the benefit of its individual members, is the most difficult for us fully to realize and appreciate. In most cases, indeed, of the employment of the ministration of man for his fellow-man, the conscious co-operation, at least, of the person benefited is imperatively required; indeed, the amount of the co-operation thus obtained may be said to be the measure of the assistance really bestowed, but here, in the

case before us, there is no such limitation. The prayers of the person making intercession ascend straight to the throne of grace, whence again the blessing descends straight upon the head of him for whom the intercession is made, without even a consciousness being necessary on his part that the intercession has been offered.

3. Without dwelling again on the ministrations of God's Word, which have been noticed in the two previous chapters, as amongst the chief instruments for bringing us into the right way, and for conducting us along it, and which are clearly no less capable of being employed for the purpose of bringing back to the right way those who have wandered from it; let us next proceed to notice those special means provided by our religion for directly inducing that state of confession and repentance in the heart of the offender, which ought to have freely offered itself of its own accord.

In the case of offences, then, committed by one believer against another, we have the well-known process enjoined on us by our Lord Himself, as we find it recorded in the eighteenth chapter of St. Matthew: "If thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault

between thee and him alone : if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church : but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

4. Further, in case of gross and open sins, there is the process of excommunication, or casting out of the body of the Church, and with the loss of those privileges which membership with the Church confers. And this process of excommunication may be regarded in a twofold light ; first, as a measure of self-protection on the part of the Church, to prevent the spread of infection from her tainted members ; and secondly, as the course most likely to be effectual, when all gentle means have failed, in bringing the offender to a sense of his sins, and in leading him to seek, by repentance and amendment, to recover the position which he had forfeited. And in whichever of these two lights we regard it, we have an instance of human ministrations made available to the restoration of the

Christian life, either in the whole body or in the individual.

5. Lastly, in the event of the rebukes or excommunication having the desired effect, there is provision made for restoring the repentant offender to his forfeited place in the body of Christ's Church. The full meaning, however, of absolution, and of the blessing bestowed by it, will perhaps be best treated in chapter viii. of this book, in connexion with the qualifications necessary for its administration.

CHAPTER V.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS.

WE have seen, then, that within the wide outer circle of human ministrations which attend upon us in each of the three departments, physical, mental, and moral, of our natural life, there is traceable an inner circle of far higher ministrations, still genuinely human, which attend upon us in each of the stages or states incidental to our higher life as Christians. We have seen, further, that all these inner ministrations converge towards the central point of the circle, which is furnished by the human nature of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which whilst it gathers up and concentrates in itself all that is most human, forms at the same time the sole connecting link between it and all that is Divine. We have seen, further, that whereas the whole world of our fellow-creatures is admissible to the exercise of the ministrations which belong to the first and outer circle, all but Christians are excluded from that of those

which belong to the second. It still, however, remains to be seen, whether the same freedom of ministration exists within the inner as within the outer of these circles ; whether the ministrations which attend upon our life as Christians are capable of being efficiently handled by every Christian, or whether the whole or part of these ministrations depend for their efficacy on their being handled by persons endowed with special qualifications over and above those possessed by every Christian.

To prevent all possibility of misconception on so important a point, it may be as well to state, that we are not now discussing the propriety of confining the exercise of some of these ministrations to a particular class as a matter of decency and order, (a point respecting which it is almost impossible to entertain a doubt,) but whether, over and above such considerations, some of these ministrations are by Divine authority especially reserved to a particular class within the Church, so that to be efficiently administered they must be necessarily administered by some of this class. And this, then, is the question which we propose to discuss in this and the following chapters.

Without entering upon every single case in

which the question before us might be discussed, let us confine ourselves to the three in which the claim of reservation to a special class is most distinctively put forward, viz. first, the celebration and administration of the Sacraments; secondly, the authority to remit and retain sins; and, thirdly, the authority to decide questions of doctrine.

1. And first, as regards the administration of the Sacrament of Baptism.

That in order to become a Christian in the full sense of the term, it is necessary to be baptized into the name of Jesus Christ, we have the clearest Scripture warrant for affirming. Nor does it need any argument to prove, that in order to the proper administration of the Sacrament, the presence and assistance of some one besides that of the person about to be baptized is required. No one can baptize himself, and that not because such a process is physically impossible, but because such a method of proceeding would deprive the Sacrament of a great part of its significance. Again, as the presence of an administrator appears to be necessary to the performance of the ceremony, so it seems hardly necessary to argue that the administrator

of baptism to another should himself have been previously baptized. Whilst, however, we see reason for confining the administration of Baptism to those who are Christians, we have as yet seen no reason for confining it to a particular class of Christians. And yet there are certain indications which at first sight may seem to suggest such a confinement. In the first place, the fact itself of the appointment of a special ordinance like that of Baptism, may be possibly regarded as suggestive of the appointment of a particular class to administer it. And if we turn to the Scripture account of the commission to baptize, we shall find a *prima facie* confirmation of such a suggestion.

The commission to baptize as recorded at the close of St. Matthew's Gospel was given by Jesus Christ to His Apostles, and to them alone. And yet at the time of His issuing the commission there was in existence a body of believers closely corresponding to, if not actually identical with, the general body of believers which, within a few days of the commission being issued, was made to form the nucleus of the lay portion of the Christian Church. The confinement, therefore, of the commission to the

Apostles might seem to indicate that the administration of baptism was intended to be confined to the Apostles and their especial representatives as distinct from the general body of believers. When, however, from the account of the first commission to baptize, we turn to the history of the administration of this Sacrament, we do not find the inference which at first sight seems to suggest itself actually borne out. Whether, as a matter of order, the administration of this Sacrament may not best be restricted to a particular class in the Church is altogether another question than the one now before us. But without in the least disputing the propriety of so restricting it, as a general rule, there can be no doubt that by the universal consent of the Church the administration of baptism is, at least, perfectly valid when performed by a layman. It must be even admitted that circumstances may and do occasionally occur when its administration by a layman is imperatively called for. And yet of all the ordinances pertaining to the Christian religion the Sacrament of Baptism is the one which is entitled to hold the foremost place, and to confer the highest privileges. Whether we regard it as instrumental to the

remission of past sins, or as conveying grace for the time to come ; whether as effecting an union with the whole body of the Church, or with the great Head of the Church, Jesus Christ Himself, both in His human and Divine capacity, we must allow that there is no greater gift conveyed by any subsequent ordinance ; nay, it may be almost said that there is no one gift or grace conveyed through any subsequent ordinance which has not been already conveyed through the Sacrament of Baptism. And yet for the efficient, and, in some cases, for the orderly administration of this Sacrament, the presence of a baptized believer in Jesus Christ is alone required.

2. It must be evident that this one established fact at once dissipates the *primā facie* view which the account of the commission to baptize, taken by itself, might seem to suggest to us. Not only so, but it also raises the doubt within us, whether the other ordinances of religion may not be at least efficiently administered when performed by laymen. Not, however, to forestal this conclusion in the case of such, let us pass on to the consideration of the Sacrament of the Communion of the Body and Blood of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

As the baptism of Jesus Christ took for its starting-point the baptism of John^a, which preceded it, so there can be no question that the Sacrament of the Holy Communion was similarly based upon the custom at that time prevalent among the Jews of accompanying the Paschal Supper with an eating of bread and drinking of wine, over which a solemn thanksgiving or blessing had been first pronounced by the master of the feast^b.

The following is the Scripture record of the institution of this Sacrament as given by the three first Evangelists, to which is added the account given by St. Paul^c, which corresponds almost exactly with that given by St. Luke, as also the accounts given by St. Matthew and St. Mark correspond closely with each other.

^a Or the baptism of proselytes; see Bengel's Work, *Über das Alter der Proselytentaufe*. Olshausen, however, in his Commentary on Matt. iii. 1, expresses himself in favour of the view maintained by Schneckenburger, in another work bearing the same title as that of Bengel, that the custom of baptizing proselytes dates from a time subsequent to that of John the Baptist.

^b See Lightfoot's "Temple Service," c. 13, and the articles "Passover" in Kitto's "Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature," and in Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible."

^c 1 Cor. xi.

MATTHEW XXVI.

20. Ὁψίας δὲ γενομένης
ἀνέκειτο μετὰ τῶν δώδεκα.

MARK XIV.

17. Καὶ ὁψίας γενομένης
ἔρχεται μετὰ τῶν δώδεκα·

26. Ἐσθιόντων δὲ αὐτῶν,
λαβὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὸν ἄρτον,
καὶ εὐλογήσας, ἔκλασε καὶ
ἐδίδου τοῖς μαθηταῖς, καὶ
εἶπε, Λάβετε, φάγετε· τοῦτό
ἐστι τὸ σῶμά μου.

22. Καὶ ἐσθιόντων αὐτῶν,
λαβὼν ἄρτον, εὐλογήσας
ἔκλασε, καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς
καὶ εἶπεν, Λάβετε, τοῦτό
ἐστι τὸ σῶμά μου.

27. Καὶ λάβων ποτήριον,
καὶ εὐχαριστήσας, ἔδωκεν
αὐτοῖς, λέγων, Πίετε ἐξ
αὐτοῦ πάντες·

23. Καὶ λαβὼν ποτήριον,
εὐχαριστήσας ἔδωκεν αὐ-
τοῖς· καὶ ἔπιον ἐξ αὐτοῦ
πάντες·

28. τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι τὸ αἷμα
μου, τῆς διαθήκης, τὸ περὶ
πολλῶν ἐκχυνόμενον εἰς
ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν.

24. καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Τοῦτό
ἐστι τὸ αἷμα μου, τῆς δια-
θήκης, τὸ ἐκχυνόμενον.
ὑπὲρ πολλῶν.

29. Λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν, ὅτι οὐ μὴ
πίω ἅπ' ἄρτι ἐκ τούτου τοῦ
γενήματος τῆς ἀμπέλου,
ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης,
ὅταν αὐτὸ πίνω μεθ' ὑμῶν
καινὸν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ
πατρὸς μου.

25. ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὅτι
οὐκέτι οὐ μὴ πίω ἐκ τοῦ
γενήματος τῆς ἀμπέλου,
ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης,
ὅταν αὐτὸ πίνω καινὸν ἐν
τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ.

MATT. xxvi.

20. Now when the even was come, He sat down with the twelve.

MARK xiv.

17. And in the evening He cometh with the twelve.

26. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My Body.

27. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it ;

28. For this is My Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

29. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you
in My Father's kingdom.

22. And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is My Body.

23. And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them: and they all drank of it.

24. And He said unto them, This is My Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many.

25. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

LUKE xxii.

14—18. And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve Apostles with Him. And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

19. And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My Body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me.

20. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in My Blood, which was shed for you.

1 COR. xi.

23, 24. For I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you,

That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My Body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me.

25. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in My Blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come.

The following is a continuation of the passage just quoted from 1 Cor. xi.

v. 27—29. "Ὡστε ὃς ἂν ἐσθίῃ τὸν ἄρτον ἢ πίνη τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ Κυρίου ἀναξίως, ἔνοχος ἔσται τοῦ σώματος καὶ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Κυρίου. δοκιμαζέτω δὲ ἑαυτὸν ἄνθρωπος, καὶ οὕτως ἐκ τοῦ ἄρτου ἐσθιέτω, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ποτηρίου πινέτω· ὁ γὰρ ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων κρίμα ἑαυτῷ ἐσθίει καὶ πίνει, μὴ διακρίνων τὸ σῶμα.

"Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation (literally judgment) to himself, not discerning the Lord's Body."

In keeping with this passage is the following from chap. x. of the same epistle:—

v. 16, 17. τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία ἐστὶν τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ; τὸν ἄρτον δὲ κλῶμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία ἐστὶ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ; ὅτι εἰς ἄρτος, ἐν σῶμα οἱ πολλοὶ ἐσμεν. οἱ γὰρ πάντες ἐκ τοῦ ἐνὸς ἄρτου μετέχομεν.

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the Blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the Body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."

Turning to the first recorded celebrations of this Sacrament we find the following passage in the description of Jesus Christ's meeting with the two disciples going to Emmaus on the day of His resurrection, Luke xxiv. 30 :—

καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ κατακλιθῆναι αὐτὸν μετ' αὐτῶν, λαβὼν τὸν ἄρτον εὐλόγησεν, καὶ κλάσας ἐπέδιδου αὐτοῖς. αὐτῶν δὲ διηνοιχθῆσαν οἱ ὀφθαλμοί, καὶ ἐπέγνωσαν αὐτόν· καὶ αὐτὸς ἄφαντος ἐγένετο ἀπ' αὐτῶν.

“And it came to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him; and He vanished out of their sight.”

In Acts ii. 42 we are informed, respecting the converts gathered in on the day of Pentecost, that

ἦσαν προσκαρτεροῦντες τῇ διδαχῇ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου καὶ ταῖς προσευχαῖς.

“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

And in verse 46 it is added :—

καθ' ἡμέραν δὲ προσκαρτεροῦντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ, κλῶντές τε κατ' οἶκον ἄρτον, μετελάμβανον τροφῆς ἐν ἀγαλλιάσει καὶ ἀφελότητι καρδίας.

“And they, continuing daily with one accord in

the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart."

We read further in Acts xx. 7. . . 11 :

Ἐν μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων, συνηγμένων ἡμῶν κλάσαι ἄρτον, ὁ Παῦλος . . . ἀναβὰς καὶ κλάσας τὸν ἄρτον καὶ γευσάμενος, ἐφ' ἱκανόν τε ὁμιλήσας ἄχρι αὐγῆς τοῦτως ἐξῆλθεν.

"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul . . when he was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, . . departed."

It is somewhat doubtful, however, whether all these passages refer to the celebration of the Holy Communion. I will only refer generally to the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel, which appears to have the same kind of reference to the Sacrament of the Holy Communion that ch. iii. of the same Gospel does to the Sacrament of Baptism. Finally, there is a possible allusion to the Sacrament of the Holy Communion in Hebrews xiii. 10, *Θυσιαστήριον ἔχομεν κ.τ.λ.*, 'we have an altar,' &c.

It is not my intention to discuss the doctrine of this Sacrament further than it affects the question of the qualifications necessary for its cele-

bration. There is, however, one view very commonly entertained respecting it, upon which as it does materially affect this particular question, it will be necessary to enter somewhat in detail. It is indisputable, then, that from a comparatively early period in the history of the Church, the celebration of the Holy Communion came to be regarded more and more in the light of a sacrifice, first in that of a thank-offering, and secondly, in that of a propitiatory sacrifice for sin. And if this view, especially the latter phase of it, be correct, it undoubtedly goes a long way towards establishing the necessity of a class in the Christian Church corresponding to the Jewish priests, in order to offer the sacrifice. It may be further said that it is this sacrificial view of the Holy Communion which forms one, at least, of the chief arguments actually advanced for the existence of such a priestly class in the Christian Church^d. It is, therefore, highly important for our present purpose, that we should ascertain what claim this view of the Sacrament has upon our acceptance.

And first, let us examine the appeal which is ordinarily made on its behalf to Scripture,

^d Charge of the Bishop of Salisbury 1867, p. 47.

and especially to the words *τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν*, 'Do this in remembrance of Me', as used by our Lord on the occasion of the institution of the Sacrament at the Last Supper.

"The words," says the Bishop of Salisbury in his recent Charge¹, "are most remarkable ones. The original words, of which 'Do this' is the translation, mean in Alexandrine Greek, 'sacrifice this,' and the other word, *ἀνάμνησις*, is also a sacrificial word, and signifies the offering of a *μνημόσυνον*."

The case must be pronounced to be a very weak one which has chiefly, if not wholly, to depend upon an occasional ambiguity in the meaning of one or two words. Yet this is actually the condition of the case before us. It is true, no doubt, that in the LXX version of the Old Testament, we do *occasionally* find the word *ποιεῖν* invested for the time by the context with the sacrificial meaning here assigned to it, almost as if it were the only one. But for one instance where it has this meaning, there are hundreds of other instances in the Old Testament, where

¹ Luke xxii. 19.

² Charge of the Bishop of Salisbury 1867, p. 52.

it is limited to the ordinary meaning suggested by the word itself. And of all the 500 times, or thereabouts, in which the word ποιεῖν occurs in the New Testament, there is not one (except it be in the disputed instance^s before us) where it can possibly bear such a meaning, though there are passages, such, for instance, as Heb. v. 1, vii. 27, viii. 3, and ix. 7, where there is a plain opening for its use in such a meaning. But it surely is more reasonable that we should infer the meaning of the word before us, from the meaning of it in the contemporary records of the New Testament, than that leaving them we should go back to an occasional, I may fairly say exceptional, meaning of the word in a version of the Old Testament composed under a different dispensation 200 or 300 years before. The same may be said of the attempt to fasten a sacrificial meaning on the word ἀνάμνησις. It is, indeed, occasionally used in the LXX version of the Old Testament to signify the of-

^s Reference is made by the Bishop of Salisbury, in p. 168 of his Charge, to passages in the New as well as in the Old Testament where the word ποιεῖν occurs in the sense of *keeping* the Passover. But it should be observed that the word, as so used, has not the signification of *sacrificing*.

fering of a *μνημόσυνον*, but it is far from being confined to such a meaning. In the New Testament it occurs but once besides the instance now before us, viz. in the *ἀνάμνησις ἁμαρτιῶν* of Hebrews x. 3, where it is used simply in the ordinary sense of calling to remembrance, just as we find the expression *ἀναμνήσαι ἀδικίας* in the LXX version of 1 Kings xvii. 18.

It is worth while remarking the absence of the words *τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν*, on which so much stress is laid from two out of the four accounts of the institution, from that viz. supplied by St. Matthew, and from that supplied by St. Mark, the nearest parallel words in these two accounts being the words *Λάβετε, φάγετε*, 'Take, eat.' Again, in one of the two accounts in which the words *τοῦτο ποιεῖτε, κ.τ.λ.*, do appear, in that viz. supplied by St. Paul in 1 Cor. xi., they are not only preceded, as in St. Matthew's and St. Mark's Gospel by the words *Λάβετε, φάγετε*, 'Take, eat,' but they are also immediately followed by the words *ὅσάκις γὰρ ἐὰν ἐσθίητε τὸν ἄρτον τοῦτον, καὶ τὸ ποτήριον πίνητε, τὸν θάνατον τοῦ Κυρίου καταγγέλλετε, ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθῃ*, 'For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's

death till He come.' And as the particle γάρ, 'for,' intimates an immediate connexion between these words and those which precede them, so the act of eating and drinking is plainly pointed to as that which is indicated by the words τοῦτο ποιεῖτε, 'Do this,' whilst in the words καταγγέλλετε τὸν θάνατον τοῦ Κυρίου, 'ye do shew the Lord's death,' we have the true explanation of the ἀνάμνησις, and one which so far from investing it with a sacrificial meaning, is quite opposed to such a meaning. The passage has a double reference. It points at once backwards and forwards; backwards to the sacrifice upon the cross, and forwards to the παλιγγενεσία, 'regeneration' of all things, when Jesus Christ will again drink wine in the kingdom of His Father.

But though a perpetual announcement of the fact of Christ's death is thus made to form a connecting link between the two extreme points of the Christian history, there is not the slightest allusion to any actual sacrifice as taking place during the whole of that prolonged interval.

As little can we find any warrant for the sacrificial view of this Sacrament in the words

εὐχαριστεῖν, 'giving thanks,' and εὐλογεῖν, 'bless,' which occur in the accounts of the institution, though a far more plausible case might be made out on behalf of this view from these words than from those just discussed. Both of these terms, and it may also be added, the expressions τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας, 'cup of blessing,' and κλάσις ἄρτου, 'breaking of bread,' were in common use amongst the Jews of our Saviour's time^h, to designate the proceedings which by traditionary usage formed part of the Paschal Supper. The words εὐλογεῖν and εὐχαριστεῖν are, it may be further observed, strictly equivalent terms, the εὐλογήσας, 'blessing,' in the accounts of the institution as given by St. Matthew and St. Mark, corresponding exactly to the εὐχαριστήσας, 'thanksgiving,' in the accounts given by St. Luke and St. Paul. The only difference between them, consists in the point of view from which they severally regard the same act, a difference which may perhaps be best illustrated by a similar difference often observed in our ordinary grace before mealsⁱ, which some-

^h See "Lightfoot's Temple Service," &c., as above referred to.

ⁱ It is in this very sense that the word εὐχαριστεῖν is used

times takes the form of a thanksgiving (εὐχαριστία) to God for His gifts, sometimes that of a blessing (εὐλογία) on the gifts themselves. And although the solemnity of the Paschal ceremonies^k, and, it may be added, the form of the blessing or thanksgiving pronounced upon the occasion, raised the blessing or thanksgiving above the level of blessings or thanksgivings over an ordinary meal, yet that they did not elevate it to the rank of a legal offering requiring the presence of a priest to offer it, is proved beyond the shadow of a doubt by the fact that this blessing was pronounced by the layman who happened to preside at the ceremony in the capacity of master of the feast.

It is often remarked how difficult it is to prove a negative. The entire absence, however, of allusion to a sacrifice or offering as forming part of this Sacrament from the sixth chapter of St. John, which plainly takes the place of the

Acts xxvii. 35. And in the same passage the expression κλάσας ἄρτον is descriptive of an ordinary meal.

^k Two cakes of unleavened bread were set before the master of the feast, one of which was broken by him and laid on the other. The master of the feast then gave thanks to God who bringeth bread out of the earth, &c.—See *Light-foot's Temple Service*, c. 13.

account of the Institution in that Gospel, must be acknowledged to constitute at least a strong presumption against the sacrificial view of the Sacrament.

The words *θυσιαστήριον ἔχομεν*, κ.τ.λ., 'we have an altar,' &c., of Hebrews xiii. 10, have been above mentioned as containing a possible allusion to the Holy Communion, though it is very difficult to determine their precise meaning. There is evidently a reference (see ver. 12) to the suffering of Jesus Christ upon the cross, and it may be that there is a reference beyond this to the participation by Christians in the victim there offered. Be this, however, as it may, there is not the slightest ground for inferring from these words the doctrine of a *recurring* sacrifice in the Sacrament. And that such an idea was quite foreign to the mind of the writer, is proved by his use, only three verses previously, of the term *οἱ ἡγούμενοι*, 'rulers or leaders,' to denote those who according to the sacrificial doctrine of the Sacrament, would have been *ιερεῖς*, 'priests,' in the fullest sense of the term.

And lastly, in the terms *ἐπίσκοπος*, 'bishop,' literally 'overseer,' and *πρεσβύτερος*, 'elder,'

by which the presiding class in the Church is formally designated in Scripture, we find the strongest possible argument against the sacrificial doctrine in question. These titles were selected, the one from a civil office, the other, from the synagogue or Sanhedrin, both from an exclusively lay source, as if on purpose to guard against the persons invested with them being confused with the Jewish priests. It matters little, however, whether we regard these terms in the meaning suggested by the sources from which they were borrowed, or in that suggested by themselves. In either case, they form the same continual protest against the doctrine of a sacrifice in the Holy Communion, involving the necessity of an order of priests (*ιερείς*) for the purpose of offering it. And I think that the argument supplied by these words, may be submitted to be itself decisive of the whole question.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS CONTINUED.

BUT though we find no warrant in Scripture for the sacrificial view of the Eucharist, or for any sacerdotal power in those who celebrate the Sacrament, it is observable that no sooner do we cross the boundary line which separates the writers of Scripture from succeeding Christian writers, than we begin to detect a slight, although, except as read by the light of its after history, a scarcely perceptible trace of each of the doctrines in question. The following forms c. xl.^a of the Epistle of Clemens, one of the earliest bishops of the Church at Rome, to the Church at Corinth. The date of the epistle is fixed by some as early as 68 A.D., and by others, apparently with more probability, as late as 98 A.D.

1. Προδήλων οὖν ἡμῖν ὄντων τούτων, καὶ ἐγκεκυφότες εἰς τὰ βάθη τῆς θείας γνώσεως, πάντα τάξει

^a The genuineness, however, of this and other passages in the epistle is disputed by Neander: see his *Geschichte der Christlichen Religion*, p. 1136.

ποιεῖν ὀφείλομεν, ὅσα ὁ Δεσπότης ἐπιτελεῖν ἐκέλευσεν κατὰ καιροὺς τεταγμένους, τὰς τε προσφορὰς καὶ λειτουργίας ἐπιτελεῖσθαι· καὶ οὐκ εἰκῇ ἢ ἀτάκτως ἐκέλευσεν γίνεσθαι, ἀλλ' ὠρισμένοις καιροῖς καὶ ὥραις· ποῦ τε καὶ διὰ τίνων ἐπιτελεῖσθαι θέλει, αὐτὸς ὥρισεν τῇ ὑπερτάτῃ αὐτοῦ βουλήσει· ἵν' ὁσίως πάντα τὰ γινόμενα ἐν εὐδοκίῃ, εὐπρόσδεκτα εἴῃ τῷ θελήματι αὐτοῦ. Οἱ οὖν τοῖς προστεταγμένοις καιροῖς ποιῶντες τὰς προσφορὰς αὐτῶν εὐπρόσδεκτοί τε καὶ μακάριοι· τοῖς γὰρ νομίμοις τοῦ Δεσπότης ἀκολουθοῦντες οὐ διαμαρτάνουσι. Τῷ γὰρ ἀρχιερεῖ ἰδία λειτουργία δεδομένη εἰσιν, καὶ τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν ἴδιος ὁ τόπος προστέτακται· καὶ λεῦταις ἴδιαι διακοναὶ ἐπικείνται· ὁ λαϊκὸς ἄνθρωπος τοῖς λαϊκοῖς προστάγμασιν δέδεται.

Subjoined is an extract from c. xliv. of this same epistle:—

2. Ἀμαρτία γὰρ οὐ μικρὰ ἡμῖν ἔσται ἐὰν τοὺς ἀμέμπτως καὶ ὁσίως προσευγόντας τὰ δῶρα τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς ἀποβάλωμεν.

The following is an English translation of the two passages:—

1. "Seeing, then, these things are manifest to us, it will behove us to take care that, looking into the depths of the Divine knowledge, we do all things in order, whatsoever our Lord has commanded us to do. And, particularly, that we perform our offerings and services to God at their appointed seasons: For these He has commanded us to be done, not rashly and disorderly, but at certain determinate times and hours.

And therefore He has ordained by His Supreme Will and authority, both where and by what persons they are to be performed, that so all things being piously done unto all well-pleasing, they may be acceptable unto Him. They, therefore, who make their offerings at the appointed seasons are happy and accepted, because that, obeying the commandments of the Lord, they are free from sin. For the Chief Priest has his proper services, and to the Priests their proper place is assigned, and to the Levites appertain their proper ministries. And the layman is confined within the bounds of what is commanded to laymen.

2. "For it would be no small sin in us, should we cast off those from their office who holily and without blame offer the gifts."

It is impossible to read these passages without remarking in them a tone altogether dissonant from that of Scripture. There is a ring in them, as it were, of a different metal.

It matters little whether we regard the *προσφοραὶ* and *δῶρα* (offerings and gifts) mentioned in these passages as referring exclusively to the bread and wine which formed the material for the celebration of the Sacrament, or as embracing the contributions of various kinds, which were made for the relief of the poor and distressed members of the Church. If the first of these two views be the correct one, we observe, in

the use of these terms, the first symptoms of the tendency to convert the thanksgiving in the Sacrament (corresponding to that of the Paschal Supper) into an offering corresponding more or less closely to the thank-offering of the Temple service. If the latter view be correct, we observe, at the most, a praiseworthy addition to the mode of making collections for the use of members of the Church to that enjoined by Apostolical authority^b. But it is equally impossible in either case to recognise in these offerings a ground for conferring on those who presented them a priestly rank to which they could lay no claim by virtue of their office as originally instituted and defined by the Apostles. Yet that a claim to some such rank was intended to be advanced in these passages is evident from the title itself, of *οἱ ποιοῦντες τὰς προσφορὰς, οἱ προσευεγκόντες τὰ δῶρα* (those that make the offerings, those that offer the gifts), a title which is plainly adopted for the purpose of exhibiting the elders of the Church in that light in which they appeared most to resemble the

^b In the order given by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2, for making collections for the saints, there is no allusion to any formal offering or dedication of the sums so collected.

Jewish priests. It is evident, further, from the distinction which Clemens proceeds to draw between the Jewish hierarchy and laity, plainly with a view of suggesting a somewhat similar distinction between the elders and main body of the Christian Church.

On the other hand, it should be observed that although we see a tendency thus early exhibiting itself to revert to the legal thank-offering of the Temple service, and through that to the Jewish priesthood, we see as yet no trace of the propitiatory sacrifice, which became in course of time the chief ground for formally investing the elders of the Church with all the powers and prerogatives of the priesthood.

In the present state of the controversy respecting the Epistles of Ignatius, it would be waste of time to enter upon a detailed examination of the expressions which they contain. Thus much, however, may be said respecting them, that whilst Ignatius insists most emphatically upon the need of the bishops and elders as a centre of unity for the Church, he does not go so far even as Clemens does (supposing the passages above quoted to be genuine) in investing them with any titles implying sacerdotal rank. And the

frequent use of the word *θυσιαστήριον*, observable in his letters, appears to have been for the same purpose of enforcing a central point of worship rather than for that of advocating any sacrificial doctrine of the Eucharist strictly so called.

Let us next pass on to the writings of Justin Martyr, about A.D. 150, which are the more satisfactory inasmuch as they contain a full account of the celebration of the Eucharist as performed in the second century of the Christian era. And they are still the more interesting from being the first detailed account of its celebration since its original institution.

The following passage is taken from his First Apology, c. 65—67.

Ἐπειτα προσφέρεται τῷ προεστῶτι τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἄρτος καὶ ποτήριον ὕδατος καὶ κράματος, καὶ οὗτος λαβὼν αἶνον καὶ δόξαν τῷ πατρὶ τῶν ὅλων διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου ἀναπέμπει καὶ εὐχαριστίαν ὑπὲρ τοῦ κατηξιῶσθαι τούτων παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ πολλὴ ποιεῖται· οὐ συντελέσαντος τὰς εὐχὰς καὶ τὴν εὐχαριστίαν πᾶς ὁ παρὼν λαὸς ἐπευφημεῖ λέγων, Ἀμήν. Τὸ δὲ ἀμήν τῇ Ἑβραϊδὶ φωνῇ τὸ γένοιτο σημαίνει. Εὐχαριστήσαντος δὲ τοῦ προεστῶτος καὶ ἐπευφημήσαντος παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ οἱ καλούμενοι παρ' ἡμῖν διάκονοι διδῶσιν ἐκάστῳ τῶν παρόντων μεταλαβεῖν ἀπὸ τοῦ εὐχαριστηθέντος ἄρτου καὶ οἴνου καὶ ὕδατος καὶ τοῖς οὐ παροῦσιν ἀποφέρουσιν. Καὶ ἡ τροφή αὕτη καλεῖται παρ' ἡμῖν εὐχαριστία, ἥς οὐδενὶ ἄλλῳ μετασχεῖν ἐξόν ἐστιν,

ἡ τῷ πιστεύοντι ἀληθὴ εἶναι τὰ δεδιδαγμένα ὑφ' ἡμῶν, καὶ λουσαμένῃ τὸ ὑπὲρ ἀφέσεως ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ εἰς ἀναγέννησιν λουτρὸν, καὶ οὕτως βιοῦντι ὡς ὁ Χριστὸς παρέδωκεν. Οὐ γὰρ ὡς κοινὸν ἄρτον οὐδὲ κοινὸν πόμα ταῦτα λαμβάνομεν, ἀλλ' ὃν τρόπον διὰ λόγου Θεοῦ σαρκοποιηθεὶς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ σωτὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ σάρκα καὶ αἷμα ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας ἡμῶν ἔσχεν, οὕτως καὶ τὴν δι' εὐχῆς λόγου τοῦ παρ' αὐτοῦ εὐχαριστηθεῖσαν τροφήν, ἐξ ἧς αἷμα καὶ σάρκες κατὰ μεταβολὴν τρέφονται ἡμῶν, ἐκείνου τοῦ σαρκοποιηθέντος Ἰησοῦ καὶ σάρκα καὶ αἷμα ἐδιδάχθημεν εἶναι. Οἱ γὰρ ἀπόστολοι ἐν τοῖς γενομένοις ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἀπομνημονεύμασιν, ἃ καλεῖται εὐαγγέλια, οὕτως παρέδωκαν ἐντετάλθαι αὐτοῖς τὸν Ἰησοῦν, λαβόντα ἄρτον εὐχαριστήσαντα εἰπεῖν· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἀνάμνησίν μου τοῦτ' ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμά μου. καὶ τὸ ποτήριον ὁμοίως λαβόντα καὶ εὐχαριστήσαντα εἰπεῖν τοῦτό ἐστὶ αἷμα μου καὶ μόνοις αὐτοῖς μεταδοῦναι. . . . Ἡμεῖς δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα λοιπὸν αἰεὶ τούτων ἀλλήλους ἀναμνησκόμεν· καὶ οἱ ἔχοντες τοῖς λειπομένοις πᾶσιν ἐπικουροῦμεν καὶ σύνεσμεν ἀλλήλοις αἰεὶ. Ἐπὶ πᾶσί τε οἷς προσφερόμεθα εὐλογοῦμεν τὸν ποιητὴν τῶν πάντων διὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ διὰ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου. Καὶ τῇ τοῦ ἡλίου λεγομένη ἡμέρᾳ πάντων κατὰ πόλεις ἢ ἀγροὺς μενόντων ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ συνέλευσις γίνεται, καὶ τὰ ἀπομνημονεύματα τῶν ἀποστόλων ἢ τὰ συγγράμματα τῶν προφητῶν ἀναγινώσκεται μέχρις ἐγχωρεῖ. Ἐἵτα παυσαμένου τοῦ ἀναγινώσκοντος ὁ προεστὼς διὰ λόγου τὴν νουθεσίαν καὶ πρόκλησιν τῆς τῶν καλῶν τούτων μιμήσεως ποιεῖται. Ἐπειτα ἀνιστάμεθα κοινῇ πάντες καὶ εὐχὰς πέμπομεν. Καὶ ὡς προέφημεν παυσαμένων ἡμῶν τῆς εὐχῆς ἄρτος προσφέρεται καὶ οἶνος καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ ὁ προεστὼς εὐχὰς

ὁμοίως καὶ εὐχαριστίας, ὅση δύναμις αὐτῷ ἀναπέμπει καὶ ὁ λαὸς ἐπευφημεῖ λέγων τὸ Ἀμήν· καὶ ἡ διάδοσις καὶ ἡ μετάληψις ἀπὸ τῶν εὐχαριστηθέντων ἕκαστῳ γίνεται καὶ τοῖς οὐ παροῦσι διὰ τῶν διακόνων πέμπεται. Οἱ εὐποροῦντες δὲ καὶ βουλόμενοι κατὰ προαίρεσιν ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ὃ βούλεται δίδωσι, καὶ τὸ συλλεγόμενον παρὰ τῷ προεστῶτι ἀποτίθεται, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπικουρεῖ ὀρφανοῖς τε καὶ χήραις καὶ τοῖς διὰ νόσον ἢ δι' ἄλλην αἰτίαν λειπομένοις καὶ τοῖς ἐν δεσμοῖς οὖσι καὶ τοῖς παρεπιδήμοις οὖσι ξένοις, καὶ ἀπλῶς πᾶσι τοῖς ἐν χρείᾳ οὖσι κηδεμὼν γίνεται.

The following is the English translation of the passage :—

“Then there is brought to him who presides over the brethren (or to that one of the brethren who presides) bread and a cup of wine mixed with water. And he having received them, ascribes praise and glory to the Father of all, through the Name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and gives a thanksgiving at length for the having been thought worthy of these things. And when he has finished the prayers and the thanksgiving, all the people present express their assent by adding Amen, which in the Hebrew language signifies so let it be. The president having given thanks, and all the people having added their assent, those whom we call deacons give to each of those who are present a portion of the bread and the wine mixed with water, over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and carry away portions for those who are absent. And this food is called by us Eucharist (thanksgiving), and

no one is allowed to partake of it unless he believes that which we teach to be true, and has washed in the laver which is appointed for the remission of sins, and for regeneration, and lives in such a manner as Christ has enjoined. For we do not receive these things as common bread or common drink, but just as Jesus Christ our Saviour, being incarnate by the Word of God, took upon Himself flesh and blood for our salvation, even so we have been taught that the food over which a thanksgiving has been pronounced by virtue of the prayer of the Word which is from Him, (by which food our blood and flesh are by conversion nourished,) is the Flesh and Blood of that Jesus who was incarnate. For the Apostles, in the memoirs composed by them which are called Gospels, thus relate that Jesus commanded them, viz. that taking bread and giving thanks, He said, 'Do this in remembrance of Me;' and that in like manner, taking the cup, and giving thanks, He said, 'This is My Blood,' and distributed to them alone. . . . And after this we continually remind one another of these things. And those of us who are well off assist all those who are in want, and we always associate with each other. And over all that we offer, we bless the Creator of all things, through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Spirit. And on the day called Sunday, there is an assembly of all, whether in town or country, and the memoirs of the Apostles, or the compositions of the Prophets, are read as long as time permits. Then when the reader has come to an end, the president in a discourse reminds them and exhorts them to an imitation of these good things. Then

we all stand up together and offer prayers. Then, as we have already said, when we have done praying, bread is brought, and wine and water, and he who presides offers up prayers and thanksgivings to the best of his power, and the people add their Amen. And the elements, over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, are then distributed and partaken of by every one, and are sent through the deacons to those who are absent. And those who are well off and willing give each of their property according as they wish, and what is collected is deposited with the president, and he assists the orphans and widows, and those who are in want from sickness or any other cause, and those who are in prison, and the strangers sojourning amongst us, and in a word he takes care of all who are in distress.

The following passage is from c. xli. of the dialogue with Trypho, of the same author :—

“Καὶ ἡ τῆς^ο σεμιδάλεως δὲ προσφορά, ὧ ἄνδρες, ἔλεγον, ἡ ὑπὲρ τῶν καθαριζομένων ἀπὸ τῆς λέπρας προσφέρεσθαι παραδοθεῖσα, τύπος ἦν τοῦ ἄρτου τῆς εὐχαριστίας ὃν εἰς ἀνάμνησιν τοῦ πάθους οὗ ἔπαθεν ὑπὲρ τῶν καθαιρομένων τὰς ψυχὰς ἀπὸ πάσης πονηρίας ἀνθρώπων, Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν παρέ-

* See Leviticus xiv. Reference is here made to that part of the ceremony which was of the nature of a thankoffering, though the general character of the ceremony was propitiatory. Tertullian, however, regards the whole of it most in the light of a thankoffering. See Trench on the Miracles, p. 220.

δωκε ποιεῖν^a, ἵνα ἅμα τε εὐχαριστῶμεν τῷ θεῷ ὑπὲρ τε τοῦ τὸν κόσμον ἐκτικέναι σὺν πᾶσι τοῖς ἐν αὐτῷ διὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον, καὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς κακίας ἐν ᾗ γεγόναμεν ἡλευθερωκέναι ἡμᾶς, καὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας καταλελυκέναι τελείαν κατάλυσιν διὰ τοῦ παθητοῦ γενομένου κατὰ τὴν βουλὴν αὐτοῦ. "Ὅθεν περὶ μὲν τῶν ὑφ' ἡμῶν τότε προσφερομένων θυσιῶν λέγει ὁ Θεός, ὡς προέφην, διὰ Μαλαχίου ἐνὸς τῶν δώδεκα (c. i. 10—12) . . . Περὶ δὲ τῶν ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ ὑφ' ἡμῶν τῶν ἐθνῶν προσφερομένων αὐτῷ θυσιῶν τουτέστι τοῦ ἄρτου τῆς εὐχαριστίας καὶ τοῦ ποτηρίου ὁμοίως τῆς εὐχαριστίας, προλέγει τότε εἰπὼν καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ δοξάζειν ἡμᾶς, ὑμᾶς δὲ βεβηλοῦν."

And the following is from c. lxx. of the same work:—

"Ὅτι μὲν οὖν καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ προφητείᾳ (Isa. xxxiii. 13—19) περὶ τοῦ ἄρτου, ὃν παρέδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ ἡμέτερος Χριστὸς ποιεῖν εἰς ἀνάμνησιν τοῦ τὸ σωματοποιήσασθαι αὐτὸν διὰ τοὺς πιστεύοντας εἰς αὐτὸν, δι' οὓς καὶ παθητὸς γέγονε, καὶ περὶ τοῦ ποτηρίου δ' εἰς ἀνάμνησιν τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ παρέδωκεν εὐχαριστοῦντας ποιεῖν φαίνεται."

^a This, I believe, to be the earliest instance on record of the use of the word ποιεῖν by a Christian writer in the sense of "offer," though as the doctrine of a sacrifice in the Eucharist gained ground, this use of the word ποιεῖν was generally reverted to. The doctrine itself of the sacrifice, and this use of the word ποιεῖν, are alike symptoms of a falling back from the standing-point of the New Testament to that of the Old.

The following is the English translation of the two passages :—

1. "And the offering of fine flour which was ordered to be offered for those cleansed from leprosy, was a type of the bread of thanksgiving, which, in memory of the suffering which He suffered for those men who are cleansed in their souls from all wickedness, Jesus Christ our Lord delivered to us to offer, that we may at once give thanks to God for having created the world with all things in it for the sake of man, and for having freed us from the evil in which we were born, and for having completely put down the powers and authorities, through Him who was made subject to suffering according to His counsel. For which reason, as I before observed, God says through the Prophet Malachi, one of the twelve, of those sacrifices which used to be then offered by you the Jews, (see Malachi i. 10—12.) But concerning those sacrifices which are everywhere offered by us Gentiles, that is, the bread of thanksgiving, and likewise the cup of thanksgiving, he there prophesies, saying at once, that we glorify His Name, and that you profane it."

2. "It is evident, then, that in this prophecy also, (Isa. xxxiii. 13—19), there is reference made to the bread which our Christ delivered to us to offer in memory of His incarnation for the sake of those who believe on Him, for whose sakes He also became subject to suffering, and also a reference is made to the cup which He delivered to us to offer with thanksgiving in memory of His blood."

In the above passages from Justin Martyr, there is a plain assertion of an offering distinct from the mere thanksgiving, and from the mere remembrance or announcement of Christ's death, each of which formed part of the Sacrament as originally instituted by Jesus Christ. On the other hand, it may be observed that there is no assertion of the need of a priest to present the offering. Indeed, so far from this being the case, the officiator is described by the simple term of ὁ προεστὼς, (he who presides,) a title which identifies him with, rather than separates him from, the main body of the congregation*.

And in the following quotations from Irenæus, about A.D. 180, whilst there is observable a very distinct assertion of the Eucharistic thank-offering, there is at the same time a total absence of all claim of sacerdotal power for those who offer it.

The following passages occur in c. xvii. and xviii. of the Fourth Book of his great work, *Contra hæreses* :—

1. "Sed et suis discipulis dans consilium, primitias

* Compare c. 116 and 117 of the Dialogue with Trypho, where Justin asserts the universal priesthood of Christians.

Deo offerre ex suis creaturis non quasi indigenti, sed ut ipsi nec infructuosi nec ingrati sint, eum qui ex creatura panis est, accepit et gratias egit dicens, Hoc est meum corpus. Et calicem similiter qui est ex ea creatura quæ est secundum nos suum sanguinem confessus est, et Novi Testamenti novam docuit oblationem, quam Ecclesia ab Apostolis accipiens in universo mundo offert Deo ei qui alimenta nobis præstat, primitias suorum munerum in Novo Testamento, de quo in duodecim prophetis Malachias sic præsignificavit (i. 10, 11,) manifeste significans per hæc quoniam prius quidem populus cessabit offerre Deo, omni autem loco sacrificium offerretur ei et hoc purum; nomen autem ejus glorificatur in gentibus."

2. "Igitur ecclesiæ oblatio quam Dominus docuit offerri in universo mundo, purum sacrificium reputatum est apud Deum et acceptum est ei, non quod indigeat a nobis sacrificium sed quoniam is qui offert glorificatur ipse in eo quod offert si acceptetur munus ejus. Per munus enim erga regem et honos et affectio ostenditur quod in omni simplicitate et innocentia Dominus volens nos offerre prædicavit dicens, (Matt. v. 23, 24). Offerre igitur oportet Deo primitias ejus creaturæ, sicut et Moyses ait non apparebis vacuus ante conspectum Domini tui; ut in quibus gratus extitit homo in his gratus ei deputatus eum qui est ab eo percipiat honorem. Et non genus oblationum reprobatum est; oblationes enim et illic oblationes autem et hic; sacrificia in populo sacrificia in ecclesia; sed species immutata est tantum, quippe quum jam non a servis sed a liberis offeratur. Unus enim et idem Dominus: proprium

autem character servilis oblationis et proprium liberorum, uti et per oblationes ostendatur indicium libertatis. Nihil enim otiosum nec sine signo neque sine argumento apud eum."

3. "Igitur non sacrificia sanctificant hominem; non enim indiget sacrificio Deus; sed conscientia ejus qui offert sanctificat sacrificium pura existens; et præstat acceptare Deum quasi ab amico. . . . Quoniam igitur cum simplicitate ecclesia offert juste munus ejus purum sacrificium apud Deum deputatum est."

4. "Offerimus autem ei non quasi indigenti sed gratias agentes dominationi ejus et sanctificantes creaturam. Quemadmodum enim Deus non indiget eorum quæ a nobis sunt, sic nos indigemus offerre aliquid Deo; sicut Salomon ait Qui miseretur pauperi fenerat Deo. Qui enim nullius indigens est Deus in se assumit bonas operationes nostras, ad hoc ut præstet nobis retributionem bonorum suorum sicut Dominus noster ait (Matt. xxv. 34—36). Sicut igitur non his indigens vult tamen a nobis propter nos fieri ne simus infructuosi, ita id ipsum Verbum dedit populo præceptum faciendarum oblationum, quamvis non indigeret eis, ut discerent Deo servire; sic et ideo nos quoque offerre vult munus ad altare frequenter sine intermissione. Est ergo altare in cœlis, (illuc enim preces nostræ et oblationes diriguntur,) et templum, quemadmodum Joannes in apocalypsi ait (xi. 19) et apertum est templum Dei, et tabernaculum; ecce enim inquit tabernaculum Dei in quo habitabit cum hominibus." (xxi. 3.)

The following is the English translation of the above passages :—

1. "But also in His advice to His disciples to offer to God the firstfruits of His creatures, not as though God wanted them, but to prove that they themselves were neither fruitless nor ungrateful, He took that bread, which is part of His creation, and giving thanks He said, 'This is My Body.' Likewise, also, He acknowledged the cup, which is a part of the same creation, to be His Blood, and He taught the new oblation of the New Testament, which the Church receiving from the Apostles offers throughout the world to God, who provides us with good, as a firstfruit of His gifts in the New Testament, of which Malachi prophesied (i. 10, 11,) clearly signifying by these words that the former people will cease offering to God, but that in every place a sacrifice will be offered to Him, and that a pure one, and His name is glorified amongst the nations."

2. "Therefore the oblation of the Church which the Lord instructed to be offered through the whole world is accounted a pure sacrifice with God, and is acceptable to Him, not because He stands in need of a sacrifice from us, but because he who offers is himself glorified in that which he offers if his gift be accepted. For there is a display of both honour and affection towards a king in a gift, which God willing that we should offer in all simplicity and innocence, prophesied saying, (St. Matt. v. 23, 24). We ought, then, to offer to God the firstfruits of His creation, as Moses

says, 'Thou shalt not appear before the Lord empty,' that in those things wherein a man is grateful he may please Him, and receive that honour which comes from Him. And it is not that offerings are altogether found fault with, for there were offerings under the Law and there are offerings under the Gospel ; sacrifices amongst the (Jewish) people and sacrifices in the Church. But there is a change made in the kind of sacrifices only, since from being offered by slaves they are now offered by children. For there is one and the same Lord, but there is one distinguishing mark of offerings made by slaves, another of those made by children, that by the kind of offering made, a sign should be given of liberty. For there is nothing useless or without a sign or meaning with Him."

3. "Therefore it is not that sacrifices sanctify the man, for God does not need sacrifice, but the conscience of him who offers sanctifies the sacrifice, inasmuch as it (the conscience) is pure and procures the acceptance of the sacrifice by God as by a friend. . . . Since, therefore, the Church offers with simplicity, its gift is justly accounted by God a pure sacrifice."

4. "But we offer to Him not as if He were in want, but giving thanks to His sovereignty and sanctifying the creature. For as, on the one hand, God needs not those things which come from us, so on the other hand we do need to offer something to God ; as Solomon says, 'He who hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord.' For though God needs nothing, He takes to Himself our works for this purpose, in order that He may make a return to us of His own good things,

as our Lord says (St. Matt. xxv. 34—36); as, therefore, without needing these things He yet wishes these things to be done by us on our own account, that we may not be unfruitful, so that Word itself gave the people a precept concerning the making oblations, although He did not need them, that they might learn to serve God, and so on the same account He wishes that we, too, should offer a gift at the altar without intermission. There is, therefore, an altar in heaven^f, (for thither our prayers and oblations are directed,) and there is a temple [in heaven], as John in the Apocalypse (xi. 19) says, 'And the temple of God was opened;' and there is a tabernacle, for 'Lo!' says he, 'the tabernacle of God, in which He will dwell with men.' (xxi. 3.)"

The following forms the commencement of the 2nd fragment of Irenæus as edited by Pfaff. In Stieren's edition of Irenæus it is numbered 38:—

Οἱ ταῖς δευτέραις τῶν ἀποστόλων διατάξεσι^g παρακολουθηκότες ἴσασι τὸν Κύριον νέαν προσφορὰν ἐν τῇ

^f These words are remarkable as shewing the signification of the word 'altar' in the early ages of the Church. It took some time for the sacrificial doctrine of the Eucharist to develop itself into all its natural consequences.

^g Probably a collection of traditionary customs and regulations which had sprung up in the Church; and which, in default of any known authors, and perhaps for the sake of investing them with greater importance, were attributed to the Apostles.

καινῇ διαθήκῃ καθεστηκέναι κατὰ τὸ Μαλαχίου τοῦ προφήτου (i. 11). "Ὡσπερ καὶ ὁ Ἰωάννης ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει λέγει· τὰ θυμιάματά εἰσιν αἱ προσευχαὶ τῶν ἁγίων. Καὶ ὁ Παῦλος παρακαλεῖ ἡμᾶς παραστήσαι τὰ σώματα ἡμῶν θυσίαν ζῶσαν ἁγίαν εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ἡμῶν. Καὶ πάλιν ἀναφέρωμεν θυσίαν αἰνέσεως τουτέστι καρπὸν χειλέων. Αἰτᾷ μὲν αἱ προσφοραὶ οὐ κατὰ τὸν νόμον εἰσίν, οὐ τὸ χειρόγραφον ἐξαλείψας ὁ κύριος ἐκ τοῦ μέσου ἤρκεν, ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα, ἐν πνεύματι γὰρ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ δεῖ προσκυνεῖν τὸν Θεόν. Διότι καὶ ἡ προσφορὰ τῆς εὐχαριστίας οὐκ ἔστι σαρκικὴ ἀλλὰ πνευματικὴ καὶ ἐν τούτῳ καθαρὰ. Προσφέρωμεν γὰρ τῷ θεῷ τὸν ἄρτον καὶ τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας εὐχαριστοῦντες αὐτῷ ὅτι τῇ γῇ ἐκέλευσεν ἐκφῦσαι τοὺς καρποὺς τούτους εἰς τροφήν ἡμετέραν^h. (The remainder of this fragment will be found among the passages referring to the consecration of the Eucharist, in the next chapter.)

The following is the English translation of the passage:—

"Those who are acquainted with the second ordinances of the Apostles know that the Lord insti-

^h It is worth observing that the Eucharistic offering is here described in terms which correspond very closely with the thanksgiving of the Paschal supper; see above, note k, p. 55. The difference shews itself in the attempt made to supply the Temple service as a basis for these words, in the place of the basis originally supplied by the Feast of the Passover. By this means a priest was by degrees called in to perform what originally was the office of a layman.

tuted a new offering in the New Testament (or covenant) according to the words of Malachi the prophet, (i. 11); as also John says in the Apocalypse (v. 8), 'The incense is the prayers of the saints.' And Paul exhorts us 'to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service,' (Rom. xii. 1.) And again, 'Let us offer the sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of our lips.' (Heb. xiii. 15.) These offerings, then, are not according to the Law, whose handwriting the Lord blotted out and took away, but according to the Spirit, for it is in spirit and truth that we ought to worship God. Wherefore the offering of the Eucharist also is not fleshly but spiritual, and hereby pure. For we offer to God the bread and the cup of blessing, giving thanks to Him because He ordered the earth to bring forth these fruits for our food, &c."

The fragment last quoted cannot fail to strike us as a most remarkable one. It appears more than any other passage in this, or, indeed, any other writer, to mark the transition from the genuine Scripture doctrine of the spiritual sacrifice of prayer and praise, and of self in all its forms, into the material sacrifice, which early began to usurp a prominent place in the services of the Church. In this passage the two kinds of sacrifice are placed, as it were, side by side, and an attempt is made to introduce the one under the guise of the other. At the same time,

in seeking thus to introduce the material offering under a spiritual form, the writer feels himself obliged to appeal to a supposed second set of apostolical ordinances, plainly amounting to a confession that, in the apostolical ordinances as contained in Scripture, he could find no warrant for so doing.

Shortly after the time of Irenæus we begin to find distinct signs of a propitiatory offering in the Eucharist in the writings of Tertullian¹ and also in those of Origen², whilst in the following centuries the assertion both of it and of the necessity of an order of priests (*ιερείς*) to officiate at it becomes more and more plainly discernible.

Briefly to recapitulate what has been said in this chapter. Whilst the doctrine of a sacrifice and of a sacrificing priesthood is entirely foreign to the Scripture records, whether of the original institution of the Sacrament, or of its after celebrations, yet no sooner do we leave the Scripture records than we find a tendency to assimilate the Christian service to the model of the Jewish temple. From the simple though solemn thanksgiving or blessing pronounced over the bread and

¹ As in the *Oblationes pro defunctis* in his *De Coronâ*, c. 3.

² See his Thirteenth Commentary on Leviticus.

wine, or from the contributions for the relief of the poor, or from both united, was developed the doctrine of an offering which by degrees assumed the shape of the thank-offering of the Jewish law, more or less suggestive of, though not actually calling for, the presence of a priest. And at the same, or rather at a somewhat later period, the commemorative phase of the Sacrament underwent a similar transformation. From being a simple but solemn announcement of the great event of Christ's death, it began by degrees to revert to the Old Testament basis of an offering of a *μνημόσυνον*, until, partly by the process of self-development, partly by the aid of the already established thank-offering, it elevated itself into the propitiatory or highest legal sacrifice, which none but a priest could offer. And thus from being a faithful copy of its original Institution by Jesus Christ, the Sacrament by degrees degenerated into a servile imitation of the obsolete ceremonies of the Mosaic Law. From setting forth the propitiatory sacrifice made by Jesus Christ upon the cross, it tended more and more to overlay and obscure it.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS CONCLUDED.

WE have still to notice a view of the Sacrament of the Holy Communion which, though it does not actually come up to the sacrificial view discussed in the two last chapters, does so far approximate it as to be liable to become confounded with it.

It is not uncommon, then, to hear this Sacrament characterized as “a feast upon a sacrifice,” a somewhat ambiguous phrase, and which may be taken to mean either (*a.*) a feast following upon a sacrifice, or (*b.*) a feast upon the victim so sacrificed.

This view of the Sacrament may perhaps be best illustrated by a reference to the Paschal Supper, which was undoubtedly “a feast upon a sacrifice” in both meanings of the phrase. It was (*a.*) a feast following upon the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb by the priest before the altar^a,

^a Deut. xvi. 2, 5, 6. See also the article “Passover” in Kitto’s “Biblical Cyclopædia.”

and (b.) a feast upon the lamb itself, which, after it had been there sacrificed, was carried home for the purpose of being eaten. Similarly, it may be represented, that there is a "feast upon a sacrifice" in the Sacrament of the Holy Communion, in one or both meanings of the phrase.

Now, with reference to this view, it may be stated in the first place that, even admitting its correctness, it by no means follows from thence that the Sacrament would require a priest (*ιερεύς*) in order to officiate at it. The part of the Paschal proceedings analogous to the celebration of the Sacrament is to be found in the Supper itself, or rather in that part of the Supper which consisted in the partaking of bread and wine, over which a blessing or thanksgiving had been previously pronounced, and not in the act of sacrifice which preceded the Supper, and which was accomplished by other hands in another place. But so far from a priest being required to officiate at the Paschal Supper, the presence of any layman in the capacity of Master of the Feast was quite sufficient for the purpose.

And it was in the capacity of Master of the Feast that Jesus Christ Himself presided at the last Paschal Supper with His disciples, and pro-

nounced the blessing or thanksgiving over the elements of bread and wine which formed part of the usual ceremony on that occasion. And in this capacity of Master of the Feast He is still succeeded by those who officiate at the celebration of His Sacrament. But the remainder of the Paschal solemnity, that, viz., which consisted in the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb at another time and place, and by the hands of the priest, finds its analogy in the Sacrifice made once for all by Jesus Christ in His capacity alike of Priest and Victim upon the altar of the cross, a sacrifice in which alike as Priest and Victim He stood quite alone, and admits no one else as His representative.

But, secondly, what has been just said upon this subject will suggest some very essential points of difference between the Paschal Supper and the Sacrament of the Holy Communion, as well as some striking points of agreement between them. The Passover was a recurring feast upon a recurring sacrifice. Each time that a lamb was to be eaten a lamb was previously sacrificed.

The Sacrament of the Holy Communion, on the other hand, whilst it resembles the Paschal Supper in so far that it is a recurring feast, dif-

fers from it in so far that it follows an act of sacrifice performed once for all, and never repeated. It is therefore incorrect to call the Sacrament "a feast upon a sacrifice" in the first meaning of the phrase, (viz. as following upon an act of sacrifice,) in the same sense in which the Paschal Supper might fitly have been so called. The one was a recurring feast following an equally recurring act of sacrifice, the other is a recurring feast following an act of sacrifice performed many hundred years ago, and never repeated since.

But, again, it may be questioned whether it is quite correct to call the Sacrament "a feast upon a sacrifice" in the second meaning of the phrase, viz. a feast upon the victim sacrificed.

It is, no doubt, true that at every fresh celebration of the Sacrament fresh mention is made of the great Sacrifice upon the cross, a fresh stroke is made upon the bell which thus keeps ever tolling out to the world its Saviour's death, but in the solemn feast itself which follows, and which forms the principal object of the Sacrament, we are called upon to partake of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, not so much in the capacity of the Victim once slain as of the great

Head of the Church, who has risen again. It is of the glorified rather than of the suffering Humanity of Jesus Christ, that His Sacrament invites us to partake.

But though the absence of a sacrifice from the Eucharist dispenses with the attendance of a sacrificing priest, it may be said that there still remain grounds for requiring the presence of some one specially qualified for the work of celebrating this Sacrament. And for all practical purposes such a person, if required, may be called a priest, even if he is not so in the strictest sense of the term.

That no special qualification is required in order to the administration of the Sacrament of Baptism has been already shewn. But the following distinction has been drawn between the two cases^b:—

“In Baptism the outward sign has no permanent relation to the inward grace, since the rite has no existence save in the act of administration; but in the Holy Eucharist the outward sign has something more than a momentary connexion with the thing signified. As respects Baptism, therefore, our Lord used no words which imply that any particular portion of the element

^b “The Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist,” by Archdeacon B. Wilberforce, p. 14, (edition of 1853).

employed is invested with a specific character; it was not *this* water, but the element at large which was sanctified to be a pledge of the mystical washing away of sin."

And again^c:—

"Since Baptism exists only in the act of its administration, it is this act alone which can be the means through which it conveys an inward gift. And therefore there is no such consecration as invests the material employed with any permanent efficacy. It is otherwise in the Holy Eucharist, where the outward part is consecrated to be the instrument through which there is a continuous ministration of the inward blessing. In the last case, therefore, our Lord's words indicated that *This* which He held in His hands was the fixed medium of conveying the hidden gift. So that in one case the medium is an *act*, in the other an *element*; the act of baptizing is the moral instrument in one instance, the consecrated element in the other."

From the distinction here drawn, I think I may say overdrawn, by this writer, we may infer that it is for the purpose of consecrating the elements of bread and wine so as to make them the medium of the communication of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ that one, at least, of the peculiar powers of the Christian priesthood is supposed to be required. Let us

^c "The Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist," &c., p. 20.

endeavour, then, to ascertain what consecration is, and what is necessary in order to its performance. The word *εὐλογεῖν*, which is most commonly supposed to refer to the act of consecration, is, as has been already observed, strictly equivalent to *εὐχαριστεῖν*. And occurring as both these words do in the account of the Last Supper, they plainly refer to the solemn thanksgiving or blessing pronounced over bread and wine by the Master of the Feast, which formed part of the proceedings of the Paschal Supper. There is, therefore, nothing in either of these words to suggest any special form of consecration, strictly so called, still less the need of any specially qualified person to pronounce it. The same may be said as regards the phrases *κλάσαι ἄρτον* and *τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας*, which, as has been already observed, were in common use among the Jews of our Saviour's time to designate the proceedings of the Paschal Supper, besides being used upon other more ordinary occasions.

The consecration appears to have consisted rather in the new life breathed into the hitherto inanimate form by Jesus Christ, than in any outward alteration of the form itself; rather in the avowed purpose for which the Church met upon

the occasion, and for which the elements of bread and wine were produced and made the subject of general praise and thanksgiving, than in any special action or expression. There is no doubt, however, that from a very early date in the history of the Church some special form began to be adopted into general use.

Thus, in the passage of Justin Martyr quoted above, we find the expression τὴν δι' εὐχῆς λόγου τοῦ παρ' αὐτοῦ (Χριστοῦ) εὐχαριστηθεῖσαν τροφήν, (words which have been variously interpreted). Thus also in the same chapter of Irenæus from which we quoted above, (lib. iv. 18,) we find the following:—

1. Προσφέρομεν δὲ αὐτῷ τὰ ἴδια, ἐμμελῶς κοινωνίαν καὶ ἔνωσιν ἐπαγγέλλοντες, καὶ ὁμολογοῦντες σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος ἔγερσιν. Ὡς γὰρ ἀπὸ γῆς ἄρτος προσλαμβανόμενος τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐκέτι κοινὸς ἄρτος ἐστίν, ἀλλ' εὐχαρίστια, ἐκ δύο πραγμάτων συνεστηκυῖα, ἐπιγείου τε καὶ οὐρανίου· οὕτως καὶ τὰ σώματα ἡμῶν μεταλαμβάνοντα τῆς εὐχαριστίας, μηκέτι εἶναι φθαρτά, τὴν ἐλπίδα τῆς εἰς αἰῶνας ἀναστάσεως ἔχοντα.

Again, in lib. v. c. 3 of the same work, we find the following:—

2. Ὅποτε οὖν καὶ τὸ κεκραμένον ποτήριον καὶ ὁ γεγωνὸς ἄρτος ἐπιδέχεται τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ γίνεται ἡ εὐχαρίστια σῶμα Χριστοῦ, κ.τ.λ.

The following forms the conclusion of the fragment of Irenæus, edited by Pfaff, of which the beginning has been already given in the preceding chapter :—

3. *Καὶ ἐνταῦθα τὴν προσφορὰν τελέσαντες ἐκκαλοῦμεν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, ὅπως ἀποφῆνῃ τὴν θυσίαν ταύτην καὶ τὸν ἄρτον σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τὸ ποτήριον τὸ αἷμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἵνα οἱ μεταλαβόντες τούτων τῶν ἀντιτύπων τῆς ἀφέσεως τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ τῆς ζωῆς αἰωνίου τύχωσιν. Οἱ οὖν ταύτας τὰς προσφορὰς ἐν τῇ ἀναμνήσει τοῦ Κυρίου ἄγοντες, οὐ τοῖς τῶν Ἰουδαίων δόγμασι προσέρχονται, ἀλλὰ πνευματικῶς λειτουργοῦντες τῆς σοφίας υἱοὶ κληθήσονται.*

The following is the English translation of these passages :—

1. "But we offer to Him His own, fitly announcing the communion which subsists between the flesh and the Spirit^d. For as the bread which comes from the earth, on receiving the evocation of God, is no longer common bread but Eucharist, consisting of two things, an earthly and a heavenly, so also our bodies, on partaking of the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, since they have the hope of the resurrection to everlasting life."

2. "When, then, the cup of wine mixed with water,

^d I have endeavoured to give the general meaning of these words as supplied by the Greek and Latin versions conjointly.

and the bread produced from the earth, receives the Word of God, and the Eucharist becomes the Body of Christ, &c.

3. "And then, having finished the offering, we evoke the Holy Spirit to make (literally to shew) this sacrifice and the bread the Body of Christ, and to make the cup the Blood of Christ, that they who partake of these antitypes* may obtain remission of sins and eternal life. They, then, who perform these offerings in memory of the Lord are not converts to the ordinances of the Jews, but inasmuch as they minister spiritually, they shall be called sons of wisdom."

I may here repeat, with especial reference to the last part of the fragment from Irenæus, what I have already remarked in the preceding chapter in reference to the first part of it, that in appealing as he does to a supposed second set of apostolical regulations, he practically allows that for the peculiar views here advanced no warrant is found in the writings of the Apostles contained in the New Testament.

Without dwelling further upon the form of consecration which gradually came into general use (though not without considerable variations) in the celebration of the Eucharist, I will only

* The word *ἀντίτυπον* stands for both the original and the copy.

remark that as we find good reason for disputing its claim to apostolical origin, so we can see in it no ground for investing the bishops and elders of the Church with sacerdotal or indeed any special qualifications in their capacity of consecrators. But, further, there is also reason for supposing that no such need of special qualification in the officiator was recognised even by those who were the first promoters of this form of consecration. Justin Martyr, for instance, who in one passage plainly asserts the use of some special form of consecration, yet in another describes the officiator at the celebration by the simple term of ὁ προεστῶς, 'he who presides,' a term which exhibits him rather as one with the congregation than as possessed of any special qualification from which they are excluded. And in the emphasis with which he twice dwells on the concurrence of the people, as expressed by their Amen, he seems to intimate that they, no less than the officiator, shared in the celebration.

Irenæus, again, though he distinctly recognises both the offering and the consecration as forming part of the celebration of the Sacrament, nowhere insists on the need of any specially qualified person to perform either one or the

other. Indeed, he always speaks of the offering as that of the Church at large, and he seems to imply the same as regards the consecration. Both seem as yet to have been regarded as performed by the whole congregation, in and through their representative, and not as performed by a class specially qualified in any way for the work, still less by a class of priests (*ιερείς*.)

In thus disputing, however, the necessity of any special qualification for the due celebration and administration of the Sacrament of the Holy Communion, I am so far from attempting to lower the dignity of those who officiate at it, that I only claim to elevate the whole body of the Church to the same level. Wherever Christ's body the Church is, there—we have Christ's own words for it—He is in the midst of it, ready, we may believe, to bless the elements of bread and wine to the communication of His own Body and Blood to all who faithfully await their reception. And it is by virtue of the joint prayers of His Church, and not by virtue of the separate action of any individual or class in it, that the necessary consecration is effected.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF ABSOLUTION.

IT was the express declaration of Jesus Christ that all power was given to Him both in heaven and earth ^a, and that this power, whether as exercised by Him in judgment or in the forgiveness of sins, was committed to Him in His character of Son of Man ^b.

And we find this authority to forgive sins distinctly exercised by Jesus Christ on at least two separate occasions. "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee," (*ἀφένονται σοι αἱ ἁμαρτίαι*) was His announcement to the man sick of the palsy who was carried into His presence at Capernaum ^c. "Thy sins are forgiven thee," (*ἀφένονται σοι αἱ ἁμαρτίαι*), was His similar announcement to the woman who had been a sinner, and who had shewn her repentance and faith by washing His feet with her tears and wiping them with the hairs of her head ^d.

^a Matt. xxviii. 18.

^c Mark ii. 5.

^b John v. 27; Mark ii. 10.

^d Luke vii. 48.

And that the meaning of the words "sin" and "forgiveness" is the same here as the meaning which we ordinarily attach to these words, is proved by the use of precisely the same words in other passages of the New Testament, where there cannot be a doubt about their meaning^c. And it is proved further by the remarks made on each of the occasions by the bystanders, *τίς δύναται ἀφιεῖν ἁμαρτίας εἰ μὴ εἰς ὁ Θεός*; "Who can forgive sins but God only?" *τίς οὗτός ἐστιν ὃς καὶ ἁμαρτίας ἀφήσιν*; "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?"^e

But again; not only do we find our Lord exercising this power Himself, but we also find Him delegating it to His Apostles. The following passage occurs in the account of His appearance to the Apostles on the evening of the day on which He rose again from the dead.

Εἶπεν οὖν αὐτοῖς πάλιν Εἰρήνη ὑμῖν καθὼς ἀπέσταλκέν με ὁ Πατήρ καὶ γὰρ πέμπω ὑμᾶς. Καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐνεφύσησεν καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς Λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἃν τινων ἀφήτε τὰς ἁμαρτίας, ἀφίενται αὐτοῖς ἃν τινων κρατῆτε κεκράτηνται.

^c Matt. xxvi. 28; Luke i. 77, xxiv. 47.

^d Mark ii. 7.

^e Luke vii. 49.

“Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you. As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whose soever sins ye retain they are retained ^h.”

I do not see how it is possible to suppose that the power here given by our Lord to His Apostles is different from that which He exercised Himself, of course with the one important exception, that whereas He exercised the power in His own Name and authority, His Apostles exercised it in their Master's name and authority, and not in their own. Still, granting this exception, the effect itself which followed upon the exercise of the power by the Apostles was the same as that which followed upon the exercise of it by Jesus Christ, just as the miracles which they performed in His Name were similar to those performed by Jesus Christ Himself. And the fact of this power to remit and retain sins having been once put into the hands of

^h John xx. 21—23. I have not thought it necessary to discuss the exact meaning of Matt. xvi. 19, xviii. 18. There appears, however, to be a close correspondence between the *δεῖν* and *λύειν* of St. Matthew, and the *κρατεῖν* and *ἀφίεναι* of St. John.

men, is in itself a complete answer to the argument which seeks to disprove the continuance of this power in the Church on the ground that it must needs interfere with the priesthood or mediation of Jesus Christ. It is evident, however, that this objection would, if well founded, tell equally against the exercise of this power by the Apostles. If they could exercise the power without infringing on the peculiar office and work of Jesus Christ, so could other men besides them.

Though, however, there is no force in this objection, there are others which it is not so easy to dispose of. I will endeavour to state those which appear to have the most force in them, and I will then proceed to consider them one by one.

First, then, it has been argued¹ that the account of the commission to remit and retain sins implies that some visible sign of the Spirit passed from our Lord to the Apostles on the occasion, and that the cessation of such visible transmission of the Spirit suggests the discontinuance of the commission itself.

In a second argument, and one of a similar

¹ See Appendix to Vol. iii. of Dr. Arnold's Sermons.

nature, it is contended that in the exercise of this power by the Apostles, each act of remission or retention of sins was accompanied by some visible sign of power, either in their own persons, or in the subject of the remission or retention, as in the infliction of some bodily disease, in the case of retention of sins, and in the recovery from it in the case of remission of sins. But as such signs are no longer perceptible, we have, it is contended, no ground for believing in the continuance of the power which was originally signified by them.

A third argument is that this power to remit and retain sins was accompanied with a special insight on the part of the Apostles into the hearts of those with whom they had to deal, and that from the cessation of such special insight we must infer the cessation of the power of which it was given to ensure the right direction.

And lastly, we find it sometimes asserted that the true explanation of the power to remit and retain sins is to be looked for in the general power of administering the Word and Sacraments, and that no special meaning is to be attached to it beyond this general one.

Without contending that there is no force at

all in these arguments, it may, I think, be fairly submitted that they are very far indeed from being conclusive.

1. The act itself of breathing on the Apostles seems indicative of an originative power in Jesus Christ^k, in contradistinction to the simply transmissive power, of which the fitting symbol is imposition of hands. But whether this be the true explanation or not, there is nothing in the account of the act of breathing itself, or in the words which accompanied it, which suggests any visible manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Any such visible manifestation appears to have been specially reserved for the day of Pentecost.

2. Nor is there any evidence at all to lead us to suppose that the after exercise of this power by the Apostles was accompanied by any outward manifestation of the Spirit in their own persons; whilst as regards the assumption that each act of remission or retention of sins was accompanied by some visible sign of the Divine favour or disfavour on the subject of the remission or retention, and that from the cessation of such signs we must infer the cessation of the power itself, let us look at one or two of the con-

^k Compare Gen. ii. 7.

sequences in which this argument, if fully carried out, would necessarily involve us. We learn, then, from Scripture¹ that the unworthy reception of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ was very commonly, if not always, followed in the Corinthian Church by the infliction of some bodily disease, in some cases of death itself. But are we to infer that, because such signs of God's anger are no longer visible, He now looks with less displeasure on the unworthy reception of the Sacrament than He did in the days of the Apostles?

Again, take the promises of our Lord to His disciples, that miraculous signs should follow those that believed^m. But now that these signs no longer accompany our belief, does belief itself in any way differ from what it was originally? The truth is, that the whole force of this argument which we are now considering, rests upon the supposition not only that the remission and retention of sins was accompanied in point of fact with some miraculous sign, but that the power and the sign were so associated together that we have reason for supposing some special connection to have subsisted between them, and

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 30.

^m Mark xvi. 17.

that, therefore, in the absence of the one, we may infer the absence of the other. But there is no reason at all for thinking that any such special connection existed in the case before us. No such connection is even hinted at in the original commission to the Apostles; and though in the few instances in which the exercise of this power is recorded^a, the retention of sins is mentioned in words which perhaps imply the visible infliction of some bodily disease, yet there is no such intimation of visible recovery in the only case of remission of sins by the Apostles which comes plainly before us^o. In the absence of any other very definite evidence on this point, we may, I think, be allowed to refer to the cases already alluded to of remission of sins by Jesus Christ Himself in His capacity, be it remembered, of Son of Man^p. In one instance, then, that of the forgiveness of the paralytic, a miraculous cure undoubtedly followed close upon the remission of sins. But so far from this cure being essentially connected with the forgiveness, the forgiveness is plainly spoken of as quite complete without it, and the miracle which did follow was

^a 1 Cor. v. 5; 1 Tim. i. 20.

^o 2 Cor. ii. 10.

^p Mark ii. 10.

not to satisfy the paralytic himself that his sins were really forgiven, but to convince the incredulity of the bystanders. And in the other recorded case of remission of sins by Jesus Christ, no miraculous performance followed at all.

3. Let us next consider the argument that the power of remitting and retaining sins was accompanied with a special insight into the subjects of the exercise of this power, which special insight being withdrawn, we must infer the withdrawal also of the power. That our Lord was Himself endowed with the power of reading the hearts of all with whom He had to deal is frequently asserted in Scripture. But we have no reason for believing that any such special insight was extended to the Apostles, nor in the most detailed account which Scripture gives us of remission and retention of sins by the Apostles is there anything to indicate that they made use of any such special gift. The incestuous person at Corinth twice comes before us^a, first, as the subject of retention, and secondly, of the remission^r of sins; but in neither of these instances does St. Paul intimate that he had any special means for arriving at a knowledge of the case. On the

^a 1 Cor. v.

^r 2 Cor. ii.

contrary, he implies that the whole Corinthian Church had the same requisite knowledge for dealing with it that he himself had.

A further answer may be made to the same objection, by a reference to the Sacrament of Baptism. The continuance of this Sacrament and the continued efficacy of the blessings, amongst others that of the remission of sins, originally attached to it, can hardly be disputed by any Christian. Nor do we usually attach any weight to the objection that we are liable to make mistakes in the admission or rejection of those who offer themselves to be baptized ; but if we are still possessed of sufficient discernment to determine who are proper subjects for Baptism, why should we be pronounced to be deficient in the discernment necessary for determining who are fit subjects for Absolution. If God still continues to dispense His blessings through the Sacrament of Baptism, Himself as we fully believe interposing, if necessary, to prevent any ill effects from the mistakes which must occasionally arise in the administration of it, why are we to believe that He has ceased to continue to dispense His blessings through another ordinance, liable to no more than the same amount of mistakes in its administration.

4. And lastly, in answer to those who seek to confine the power of remitting and retaining sins to the ordinary ministration of the Word and Sacraments, it is, I think, sufficient to point to the Scripture account of the commission as manifestly implying a distinct power, conveyed, as it was, at a different time and place from the commission to baptize, &c., and in different language. In saying this, however, I am far from denying a correspondence between the forgiveness of sins conveyed through the ordinance of Absolution, and that conveyed through the Sacrament of Baptism. Indeed, it seems as impossible to deny the very close correspondence which subsists between them, as it is impossible to assert their identity.

The Sacrament of Baptism and the ordinance of Absolution plainly come before us in Scripture as separate parts of one and the same divine plan for the conveyance of God's gifts to man through the instrumentality of his fellow-man. The one takes its place amongst those human ministrations which are introductory to the Christian life, and the other amongst those which are restorative of it. In the case of the offender in the Church at Corinth, we see an instance of the separate and yet harmonious co-operation of each

of these two powers. This man had, no doubt, previously believed in Jesus Christ, and had been baptized into His Name for the remission of his former sins. On his subsequently committing an act of gross offence against the laws both of God and man, he was cast out from Christ's body, the Church, and with his sins bound close upon him, to make him feel the full weight of them, he was formally delivered over to Satan.

Again, no sooner had this punishment proved effectual to his repentance, than he was loosed of his sins and reinstated into his former place in Christ's Body, which for a while he had lost.

In thus, however, insisting on the relation which Scripture shews us to have subsisted between the Sacrament of Baptism and the power to remit and retain sins, we must not omit to notice one very marked distinction which exists between them. Scripture most plainly intimates that, in order to gain entrance into the kingdom of Jesus Christ, men must avail themselves of the Sacrament of Baptism. But the same Scripture is totally silent respecting the necessity of the ordinance of Absolution for the remission of sins committed subsequently to their entrance

into this kingdom. The language of St. John on this subject has been already quoted, and his language is but the echo of the uniform language of the New Testament.

We have now considered the arguments by which it is usually sought to disprove the continued existence of the power to remit and retain sins, and we may, I think, dismiss them all without attaching any weight to any of them. Let us next turn to the positive arguments which are adducible in favour of the continuance of this power. And here the precise and emphatic language of the Scripture account of the delivery of this power cannot fail to strike us as constituting in itself a most powerful argument in favour of its continuance. Why else, we may ask, should it have been so specially recorded? We here see a power formally handed over to men who, whatever may have been their gifts, were yet, after all, only men like ourselves, to a greater extent than perhaps is generally realized by us. We see this power thus given made to fit into the general plan of human ministrations provided by Jesus Christ for the formation and maintenance of His own body, the Church. We see it dealing with a particular class of sins,

viz. those committed by men after their entrance upon the new life, in a manner corresponding to the way in which the Sacrament of Baptism deals with sins committed previously to the entrance on the new life; we acknowledge that part of this divine plan has come down to us in all its original efficacy, that the Sacrament of Baptism is still as available for the remission of sin committed previously to belief as it was in the days of the Apostles; we cannot help recognising the same call as ever for the operation of the corresponding part of the same plan, the same occasion for retention of sins in the notorious offences committed by believers, the same occasion for remission of sins in the frequent instances of deep contrition in those who have thus offended. And with nothing of the slightest consequence to urge against our belief in the continued existence of this power to remit and retain sins, and with everything to urge in favour of it, what remains to us but thankfully to accept this as one amongst the many provisions with which God has entrusted man for the benefit of his fellow-man?

To the argument just stated may be subjoined one or two points for consideration, which, though

they cannot perhaps lay claim to add directly to the proof of the continuance of the power to remit and retain sins, may be said to be indirectly corroborative of it.

One of the first natural tendencies in a heart oppressed with care is to seek a relief in those around it, and the very act of telling its own care to others helps, in a great measure, to relieve it from the burden which so long as it was untold, threatened to crush and overwhelm it. And this natural tendency in the sufferer is met by an equally natural tendency in those confided in, not only to express their sympathy with, but also, to render all the assistance in their power to him who has so confided in them.

The overflow of care is met by a corresponding overflow of relief, and in both the one and the other we recognise the same close bond of communion which unites man with his fellow-man. And in the natural tendency to seek assistance at the hands of others, and in the natural tendency of these others to impart the assistance thus required, we may, I think, fairly recognise a legitimate basis for the erection of just such a ministration as that which here presents itself to us. For the burden of care we have only to

substitute the far heavier burden of sin, and for the assistance rendered by the members of the same great human society, we have only to substitute that which is rendered by the members of the body of which Jesus Christ is the Head, and through which He administers the gifts and blessings of which He is Himself the source.

A still further corroboration is furnished by the efficacy, to which attention has already been called, attached to intercession. Scripture authorizes us to regard this power as available not only for those who on their part consciously co-operate with the prayers offered on their behalf, but for those also who are unconscious of the fact that they are offered, nay, to a certain extent for those who, if conscious of it, yet at the moment repudiate the assistance thus rendered to them. But is it harder to believe that the ministration of the Church is less available for the remission of sins already repented of, than for those still persisted in? It may, indeed, be replied, that for those who already repent, there is no longer the same need of assistance as for those who do not. Yet, at all events, the amount of assistance capable of being actually rendered through Intercession, appears to be greater than that claimed

for Absolution. Whilst, moreover, the need of Baptism for the remission of sins committed previously to belief, though already repented of, affords a direct precedent for the employment of another department of the same system of human ministration for the remission of sins committed and repented of subsequently.

In one point, it must be allowed, the argument for the continued existence of this power appears at first sight to be somewhat deficient. It is notorious that for several hundred years* after

* According to Gieseler ("Ecclesiastical History," vol. iii. p. 358, English Translation,) the precatory form of Absolution was alone made use of down to the thirteenth century. I am informed, however, by my friend the Rev. W. Bright, that the absolute form is to be found in the Pontificale of Egbert, Archbishop of York in the eighth century.

The following is an extract from the "Life of Bishop Bull," by Robert Nelson: "He would sometimes desire to receive Absolution in the form used in the Communion Office, which he thought came nearer to the precatory forms of Absolution mentioned in the Fathers, than any other. But it doth not appear that he hereby condemned the use of that Form which is at least in some cases prescribed by our excellent Church in her Office for the Visitation of the Sick, or that he had any doubt concerning the benefits of sacerdotal Absolution, or of that authority which is derived to the ministers or delegates of Christ of forgiving the penitent their sins "in His name," since in his last acts of preparation for death he earnestly desired it, and solemnly received it.

the time of the Apostles, Absolution was administered only under the precatory form, similar to that which is contained in our own Communion Service. And this may be supposed to indicate that during all that time the Church had not sufficient faith in the continuance of the power originally given to the Apostles, otherwise she would have at once adopted the direct form now in common use in the Church of Rome, and contained in our own Service for the Visitation of the Sick.

Should such an objection, however, be raised, it is easily answered. Whatever may have been the form which the early Church thought best to make use of in its administration of the power entrusted to it, there is not the smallest ground for doubting that she, at least, had the fullest confidence in the reality of the Absolution thus

None can deny that the form of Absolution by him chosen is certainly primitive and therefore unexceptionable, whether the other be so or no, hath been disputed by the learned; and he had a right to choose that against which no exception could lie. This evidently was the case of this excellent prelate; and upon this account, I suppose, he desired no other form of Absolution than this, which was undoubtedly most ancient, a few days before his death."—(p. 305, Oxford Edition.)

given. In fact, instead of indicating any distrust in the continuance of the power to remit sins, her use of the precatory form of Absolution only exhibits an instance of her full trust in the efficacy of her own prayers. At the most, it only proves her to have resorted to the combination of two instruments, that of Intercession as well as of Absolution, when one alone might have sufficed. But whatever amount of logical consistency with the original terms of the commission may be exhibited by the direct form of Absolution since adopted, it must certainly be pronounced deficient in that authority which the ancient custom of the Church is competent to afford.

Having now stated the principal grounds for believing in the continued existence of the power to remit and to retain sins, let us next consider what qualification appears to be necessary to the due administration of this power.

It is clear from the account given by St. John, and we may add from those given by St. Matthew relating apparently to the same power, that the commission was given by Jesus Christ to the Apostles, and directly at least to them alone. And this fact may seem to point to the inference that

if they were succeeded at all in this power, they were succeeded in it by those who were their especial representatives in the Church, and not by all the members of the Church, or even by the whole Church collectively. We have, however, already seen just the same inference at once suggested and disproved in the instance of the Sacrament of Baptism. But further, we have seen good grounds for disputing the claim of any class or order in the Church, as distinct from the whole body of it, to be recognised as the especial representatives of the Apostles. The terms Bishop and Elder, and the description of their office in Scripture, so far from leading us to recognise in them a separate order or class in the Church, leads us on to the contrast to identify them in the strictest manner with the main body. And in the only instance which is fully recorded to us in Scripture of the exercise of this power in the remission and retention of sins, we shall see this view fully confirmed. The retention of sins first comes before us in the following passage:—

1. "Ὡς ἀκούεται ἐν ὑμῖν πορνεία, καὶ τοιαύτη πορνεία ἥτις οὐδὲ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, ὥστε γυναικὰ τινα τοῦ πατρὸς ἔχειν καὶ ὑμεῖς πεφυσιωμένοι ἐστέ, καὶ οὐχὶ

μᾶλλον ἐπενθήσατε, ἵνα ἄρθῃ ἐκ μέσου ὑμῶν ὁ τὸ ἔργον τοῦτο πράξας ; ἐγὼ μὲν γὰρ ὡς ἀπὼν τῷ σώματι, παρὼν δὲ τῷ πνεύματι, ἤδη κέκρικα ὡς παρὼν τὸν οὕτως τοῦτο κατεργασάμενον, ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ συναχθέντων ὑμῶν καὶ τοῦ ἐμοῦ πνεύματος σὺν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ παραδοῦναι τὸν τοιοῦτον τῷ Σατανᾷ εἰς ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός, ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα σωθῇ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ Κυρίου. 1 Cor. v. 1—5.

“It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

The following passage relates to the remission of the sins of the offender :—

2. Ἰκανὸν τῷ τοιοῦτῳ ἡ ἐπιτιμία αὕτη ἡ ὑπὸ τῶν πλειόνων, ὥστε τοῦναντίον μᾶλλον ὑμᾶς χαρίσασθαι καὶ παρακαλέσαι, μήπως τῇ περισσοτέρᾳ λύπῃ καταποθῇ ὁ τοιοῦτος. διὸ παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς κυρῶσαι εἰς αὐτὸν ἀγάπην· εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ ἔγραψα, ἵνα γνῶ τὴν δοκιμὴν ὑμῶν εἰ εἰς πάντα ὑπήκοοί ἐστε. ᾧ δέ τι χαρίξεσθε,

καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ὃ κεχάρισμαι, εἴ τι κεχάρισμαι, δι' ὑμᾶς ἐν προσώπῳ Χριστοῦ· ἵνα μὴ πλεονεκτῇθωμεν ὑπὸ τοῦ Σατανᾶ· οὐ γὰρ αὐτοῦ τὰ νοήματα ἀγνοοῦμεν. 2 Cor. ii. 6—11.

“Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also: for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.”

In these passages we find, on the one hand, the Apostle himself exercising the power firstly of retaining and secondly of remitting sins; and on the other hand, we find a certain assumption of the Church into the exercise of each department of this power. The words, “I verily, as absent, have judged already concerning him that hath so done this deed,” point to the Apostle’s own exercise of the power; the words, “In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one,” &c., point to the co-option of

the Church into a share of the power exercised by the Apostle in the punishment of the offender. And this co-option of the Church is still more plainly shewn in the passage relating to the restoration of the offender: "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment inflicted of many." And again, "So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him." And again, "To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also: for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ."

It is impossible to deny the foremost place occupied by St. Paul in this exercise of the power to retain and to remit sins, but it is also equally impossible to deny the subordinate co-operation of the Church in the exercise of it. And by the expression Church, we must not suppose that the elders of the Church were alone co-opted into the exercise of this power, to the exclusion of the rest. On the contrary, the elders are here merged in the general body of the Church; there is not even a mention made of them.

There is, indeed, no doubt that in course of time the power which was originally deposited with the Church at large became, like all its other powers, gradually concentrated in the hands of

one particular class in the Church, to the practical exclusion of the rest. At the same time, the very difference of title (that of *ιερείς*, or priests) which this class assumed to itself in the capacity of special administrator of these powers, in direct contravention of the title originally bestowed upon it, constitutes in itself at once a sufficient evidence of the usurpation, and, it may be added, an exact measure of the amount of usurpation effected.

Yet even in spite of this usurpation, we find very plain indications, sometimes in quarters where we should least have expected to find them, that this power was originally entrusted to the whole Church, as opposed to any one class in it. Thus we find Tertullian alluding to it as belonging by general acknowledgment to the Church[†]. Thus, too, we find Firmilian, bishop of Cæsarea, referring to it in his letter to Cyprian as given "*ecclesiæ et episcopis*," ("to the Church and to the bishops,") not to the latter alone. But we also find still plainer in-

[†] *De Pudicitia*, c. 21: "Sed habet inquis potestatem ecclesia delicta donandi," &c.

^α "Potestas ergo peccatorum remittendorum apostolis data est et ecclesiis quas illi a Christo missi constituerunt et episcopis qui eis ordinatione vicaria successerunt." (*Cypriani Epistolæ*, ep. 74.)

dications than those which can be supplied by any individual authorities in the custom which long prevailed in the Church of making both confession and absolution part of the public service of the Church, in which the whole congregation joined. We also find occasional leave given to deacons to administer absolution². And not the least remarkable indication is supplied in the forms of mutual confession and absolution of priest and people which occur both in the Mass and Daily Office of the Roman Church, and in the Service-books of our own Church in use previously to the Reformation. It is true, as the Bishop of Salisbury remarks in his recent Charge³, that the absolution thus given is confined to the precatory form, but the limitation thus imposed upon it is in a great measure removed by the consideration that all absolution was originally granted under the same form.

It is also deserving of attention that even in comparatively modern times some of the most eminent divines of the Roman Church have allowed a certain power of granting absolution to others besides priests⁴.

² See Bingham, vi. 576.

³ p. 37.

⁴ Thus Albertus Magnus distinguishes between five different kinds of "potestas absolvendi," of which the fourth is

Perhaps, however, the strongest of all arguments against the necessary confinement of the administration of absolution to the bishops and elders of the Church, is supplied by the Sacrament of Baptism. This Sacrament has been always held to convey a plenary remission of sins, so that in fact it may be regarded as administering absolution in the fullest possible sense of the term. Indeed, it often goes among Church writers by the name of the greater absolution*. At the same time, it is acknowledged that for the efficient administration of this Sacrament no special qualification is required beyond that possessed by every Christian. Is there not good reason for believing that the qualifications which are sufficient for the administration of the greater absolution are sufficient also for that of the lesser?

"ex officio ministrorum concessa sacerdotibus;" and the fifth is "ex unitate fidei et caritatis, et hæc pro necessitatis articulo descendit in omnem hominem ad proximum subveniendum." (In Sent., lib. iv. dist. 17, art. 58. See Gieseler, iii. 359.)

* See Bingham, vi. 532 and 576.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DECISION OF POINTS OF DOCTRINE.

THE parting words of our Lord to His Apostles^a have been already considered in so far as they bear upon the administration of the Sacrament of Baptism; but they have also been made the basis of a claim irrespective of that Sacrament. The words *διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμὶ πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος* ("teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world,") have been taken to imply that a power was given by Jesus Christ to His Apostles, to be by them transmitted to their special representatives in every age of the Church, to pronounce authoritatively and finally in matters of doctrine. And thus the bishops, or the bishops and the elders of the Church combined,

^a Matt. xxviii, 20.

have come to be regarded by many in the light of a Court of Final Appeal in all such matters. I need not say that in this claim, if well founded, we must recognise one of the most important prerogatives of the Christian priesthood, constituting as it does that body the sole and absolute dispensers of God's truths to men.

The first remark which suggests itself in reference to this claim is that the authority of Scripture in matters of doctrine is thereby practically superseded, since in all cases of appeal to Scripture a further appeal lies to this Court for the meaning of the passage of Scripture to which in the first instance the appeal is made. And the extent to which the plainest meaning of Scripture may thus come to be set aside is illustrated in a remarkable manner by the very case now before us.

Reference is in the first instance made to the passage in Scripture just quoted, in proof that this power to decide controverted points of doctrine has been given by our Lord to the bishops or bishops and elders of the Church, and on the objection being made that the passage does not confirm the claim which is thus sought to be deduced from it, a further reference is made to

the interpretation which the Church (i. e. in this case the bishops and elders of the Church) is supposed to have assigned to the passage, under the assumption that the interpretation so given must necessarily be the correct one. And if it is again objected that the Church (i. e. the bishops and elders of the Church) has no authority thus to settle the meaning of Scripture, reference is for the second time made to the same passage of Scripture for a proof that it has such an authority. And so by means of that faulty process of reasoning, known commonly by the name of arguing in a circle, one of the most important claims of the priesthood is looked upon as irrefragably established. But as it is in vain that we look at this passage of Scripture for the meaning which has been forced upon it in spite of itself, so it is equally in vain that we search for other passages, such as those contained in our Lord's discourse on the evening before His crucifixion^b, to make good the deficiency in the proof and to establish the claim. Indeed, it is very remarkable that the nearest approach to inspiration which is attributed to any besides the Apostles is attributed by St. John himself

^b John xiv—xvi.

to all believers in Jesus Christ, and not to any special order among them *.

It is also deserving of notice that the decree of the so-called first council of Jerusalem was headed by the name of "the brethren," as well as by those of the Apostles and elders ^d.

Perhaps, however, the strongest Scriptural protest against the claim in question is to be found in St. Paul's epistles, the general tenor and spirit of which, to say nothing of incidental passages contained in them *, is undoubtedly such as to promote a thorough manliness of mind and independence of judgment diametrically opposed to that subjection and prostration of the intellect in matters of faith, which it is the tendency and aim of maintainers of the claim to uphold and to promote.

Thus much, indeed, may be readily conceded, that in the absence for a while of any general collection of the writings which now compose the New Testament, the bishops and elders, in their capacity of leaders and representatives of the Church, were, to a far greater extent than they now are, the depositories of the great truths of the Christian faith. But that they

* 1 John ii. 20, 27.

^d Acts xv. 23.

* 1 Thess. v. 21; 1 Cor. ii. 15; 2 Cor. i. 24.

were looked upon as endowed with any special insight into the nature of those truths which were thus given into their keeping there is no proof at all. And whatever may have been the position thus assumed by them for a while as guardians of the faith, yet this was subsequently very much modified by the gradual collection of the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists, and still more so by the diffusion, in more modern times, among all classes, of the education and knowledge which were for a time almost confined to the clerical body.

But history is only too full of examples to prove how difficult it is for any class of men which has once been invested with power voluntarily to resign any portion of that power, however forcibly it may be urged to do so by a change in the circumstances which originally occasioned its investment with it. And it is hardly less difficult to refrain from making the amount of power already gained the means of acquiring more, and so of gradually extending it far beyond the limits originally assigned to it.

It should perhaps be further observed, that in the reference which is so frequently made to the writings of the Fathers in support of the claims

of the bishops, or of the bishops and elders, of the Church, the appeal thus made lies exclusively to that particular portion of the Church on whose behalf the claim is raised. Almost all the early Christian writers were themselves members of the clerical body, and this fact ought to make us, at least, very cautious how we receive their evidence on this or any question which affects the position of those whose claims they naturally felt the strongest possible interest in advancing.

After all, however, one of the strongest objections to the claim in question is to be found in its utter incompatibility with some of the clearest dictates of our own nature, which imperatively urge upon us the duty no less than the right of exercising our own judgment in every matter in which we are concerned, and which forbid us to sacrifice the deliberate conclusions of our own reason to any human authority whatsoever. At the same time, in thus asserting this claim on behalf of the individual judgment, I am far from implying that it ought to be exercised by every one in every stage of his intellectual growth; indeed, the instincts of our nature will themselves suggest the limits within which this claim

may, in each particular instance, be properly exercised.

One of the first instincts which makes itself felt within us is the disposition to rely in everything on the guidance of those around us, though at each stage of our intellectual progress this feeling keeps imperceptibly retiring before the advance of another and far nobler instinct, that of reliance on our own research and judgment. And as it is absurd and unnatural to expect the child to think and judge for himself, so it is still more absurd and unnatural to continue to treat the man as if he were always a child, to cramp the full growth and activity of manhood with the swaddling-bands which suited its infancy.

And lastly, what has just been said of the incompatibility between the dictates of our own nature and the attempt to subject them to external control, whilst it leaves untouched and undisputed the parental authority of the parent, the teacher, and the Church within their respective spheres, must be understood to apply with its full force to all attempts at subjecting our mature judgment to any kind of human authority whatever, whether as embodied in Papal infallibility or in General Councils.

In the promise of Jesus Christ to be present with His Apostles to the end of the world, we shall always most thankfully recognise a pledge of general guidance and assistance to all believers who will humbly and sincerely seek it; but we shall at the same time repudiate every attempt at making it the ground for the erection of a claim at entire variance with the uniform language of Scripture, and with the no less emphatic utterances of our own hearts.

CHAPTER X.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

THE following, it will be remembered, has formed the subject for discussion in the five preceding chapters. Of all the human ministrations employed in the service of our religion, are there any which necessarily require any special qualifications for exercising them, over and above the qualifications possessed by every baptized believer in Jesus Christ?

In order to answer this question, we have taken, one by one, the three functions whose efficiency is generally supposed most to depend upon some special qualifications in the persons performing them, and after due consideration of each we have come to the conclusion that in no one of the three are any such special qualifications absolutely required.

It must, however, be admitted that there are certain facts which appear at first sight to modify, if not altogether to contradict, the conclusion at which we have arrived.

Not only do we find in the Apostles themselves a body of men endowed with special gifts and powers, but we apparently find the Apostles succeeded in some, at least, of these powers by persons like Timothy, to whom a *χάρισμα* (gift) was imparted through the imposition of the hands of St. Paul and of the presbytery*. We also find mention in Scripture of the appointment in almost every Church from its commencement of elders if not of bishops, who in their turn transmitted their office to others under the same form of imposition of hands under which they had themselves received it; and it may very naturally be asked, How is the conclusion at which we have arrived in the preceding chapters reconcilable with such facts as these?

In answer to this argument, we allow most fully the existence from the very first of an order instituted for the purpose of exercising a general superintendence over the affairs of the Church, and for taking the lead in the celebration and administration of the Church's ordinances. At the same time, we have no ground for supposing this order to have been originally invested with any special qualifications over and

* 1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6.

above those which were required for these particular purposes. We have only to recall attention to the difference between *πρεσβύτερος*, 'elder,' (or *ἐπίσκοπος*^b), and *ιερεὺς*, 'priest.' And whilst we fully allow the argument so far as it tends to establish the position occupied by the first, we contend that it entirely fails to establish that occupied by the second.

As regards the Apostles, we have every reason for believing that such of their special qualifications as were necessary for the first creation of the Church terminated in themselves, and that such as were necessary for the after maintenance and development of the Church passed into the entire body of Christian believers, who, therefore, especially in their collective capacity, are to be regarded as constituting the nearest existing representation of the Apostles.

The true apostolical succession is accordingly to be looked for in the transmission of the privileges and powers, and they are many and great, which belong to the whole body of believers in one generation of the Church, to the whole body in another, and not simply in the transmission

^b *πρεσβύτερος* and *ἐπίσκοπος* are in the New Testament convertible terms: see Acts xx. 17, 28; Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii.

of a single and comparatively unimportant power belonging to one class in the Church to others of the same class only. As regards the ordination of the first bishops and elders by imposition of the Apostles' hands, it must be borne in mind that imposition of hands was made use of both by them and others for other purposes than that of ordination; whilst, again, as regards the *χάρισμα* imparted to Timothy, and, it may be presumed, to others of his class, it must be remembered that Scripture records the exercise of a great variety of *χαρίσματα* by members of the Church, many of them not bishops or elders, or even deacons^c.

In the *χάρισμα* imparted to St. Timothy we recognise just that gift of pastoral superintendence which was required by the circumstances of the Church over which he was placed, and nothing more. And in the letters written by St. Paul^d for the purpose of instructing Timothy and Titus in the duties of their office, we cannot fail to remark the most entire repudiation of all that priestly power and authority which has

^c Rom. i. 11, xii. 6; 1 Cor. vii. 7, xii. 4, 9.

^d The same may also be said of the First Epistle of St. Peter.

since been so largely claimed on behalf of their successors.

There can be no doubt of the most significant fact that the sacrificial service of the Temple was carefully excluded from forming any part of the foundation on which the Church of Christ was originally erected. The general mode of conducting the service of the Church was adopted almost entire from that of the synagogue. The Sacrament of Baptism was adopted either from the baptism of John, or from that of proselytes, neither of them requiring the presence of a priest to administer it. The Sacrament of the Holy Communion was based upon the proceedings which formed an ordinary part of the Paschal Supper, at which any Jewish layman might officiate. And if there is any previous basis for the ordinances of Excommunication* and

* The Jewish form of excommunication seems certainly to have formed the basis of the Christian form. But that Absolution, at least as conveyed in the formula ἀφίεναι ἀμαρτίας, was unknown to the Jews of our Saviour's time, appears from the remarks made by them on each occasion of the exercise of the power under this form by Jesus Christ. If the form had been in use among the Jews, they might have resented His use of it as an usurpation of the authority of the Sanhedrin, but scarcely of God Himself.

Absolution, it is to be found in the power exercised by the Sanhedrin or elders of the Jews, not by the priests, at least in their capacity as such. At the same time, in thus pointing to these Jewish ceremonies as supplying the basis and starting-point of the great Christian ordinances, we are very far from implying that the efficacy of these ordinances under their Christian form, was limited to that possessed by them under their Jewish form. On their assumption into the Christian service, a new life was doubtless breathed into their hitherto comparatively inanimate substance. The washing, which hitherto had been a symbol of purification, was transformed into an actual washing away of sins; the partaking of the bread and wine at the Paschal Supper, passed into the partaking of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Still whatever new life was breathed into these ordinances by the great Creator and Head of the Church, the old type of them was still carefully preserved, the body still retained the outward shape and semblance of the shadow, or rather, skeleton from which it originated.

And as it was with the ordinances, so, too, it was with those for whose benefit the ordinances

were made. The Christian Church was raised to an elevation above the Jewish Church exactly corresponding to the elevation of the ordinances. The same relation was maintained between the Church and its ordinances in each of the two stages of its existence, and as there was no need of a priest to celebrate or administer these ordinances in the first stage, so neither was there in the second.

Such is the view everywhere taken by Scripture, though as we quit Scripture and advance into the history of the Church, we find this original view disappearing, and an entirely different one taking its place. By slow degrees the Church became shifted from the ground which it originally covered on to a new one. The structure itself became imperceptibly transformed from the likeness of the synagogue into that of the temple. The order of elders made way for an order of priests.

And it is not a little remarkable that the first symptom of this change is perceptible in the very first Christian writing which succeeded to the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists, a writing which for a while seemed on the point of gaining admission into the Canon of Scripture itself, from

which, however, an all-wise Providence eventually excluded it¹. And it is ever thus with the greatest departures from the truth. It needs but a very slight impetus in a wrong direction to be persistently followed out, in order to end in the widest possible deviation from the straight course. Step by step we may pursue the track from the very commencement, and each step seems but the legitimate result of all which preceded it. It is only when we have left the original starting-point far behind, and then only when we compare the point at which we have arrived, not with our own steps immediately preceding it, but with the course which we ought to have pursued but did not, that we are enabled to measure the amount of the divergence into which we have been imperceptibly betrayed.

After all, however, let us recollect that it is not the whole Church, but only a numerically small part of it, that is responsible for this divergence. Again, great as the amount of diverg-

¹ The Epistle of Clemens was read publicly along with the New Testament in some churches; see Jerome *de Viris Illustribus*, c. 15; Eusebius H. E., iii. 16, iv. 23; and it is found entered in the catalogue prefixed to the Alexandrian MS. as part of the New Testament.

ence is when viewed as a whole, yet it is only for a small portion of it that each generation of its promoters was at least directly responsible. The whole of the divergence was the work of many generations, and it is consequently amongst many generations that the whole blame of it has to be distributed.

On the other hand, whilst we freely and thankfully exonerate each individual promoter of the change from the greater share of the blame attached to the whole transaction, whilst we freely and thankfully recognise the many high and saintly qualities exhibited by many of its very chiefest promoters, yet we must not allow these considerations to hinder us from denouncing the change itself as the greatest act of usurpation that has ever been perpetrated by man; as, in fact, a double encroachment, first on the rights and privileges common to all believers, and secondly, on those peculiar to the great Head and High-priest of the Church, Jesus Christ Himself.

If, however, any one feels tempted to doubt whether so great a change in the constitution of the Church could be thus noiselessly and rapidly effected, though in truth such a description is

little applicable to a process which was diffused over some centuries, he has only to turn to the case of a very similar change effected in the Church of Galatia^s, during the single lifetime and almost under the very eyes of the great Apostle.

^s Gal. i. 6, iii. 1.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DIFFERENT MEANINGS OF THE WORD PRIEST.

IN order to clear up any remaining obscurities in the subject before us, let us briefly distinguish between the several meanings capable of being attached to the word ‘priest.’

It need hardly be said that in the English word ‘priest’ we find the equivalent of two widely different Greek terms, viz. *πρεσβύτερος* (*prêtre*), and *ιερεύς*. In so far as it is the equivalent of *πρεσβύτερος*, or ‘elder,’ its meaning has been fully discussed in the preceding chapters. The meaning of the word *ιερεὺς* will, perhaps, be best conveyed in the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews^a:—

1. *πᾶς ἀρχιερεὺς ἐξ ἀνθρώπων λαμβανόμενος ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπων καθίσταται τὰ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, ἵνα προσφέρῃ δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίας ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν.*

“Every high-priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts” (thank-offerings) “and sacrifices for sin” (propitiatory or sin-offerings).

The first and most prominent feature in the

^a ch. v. 1.

office of priest, and that by which he is generally recognised, is described in the latter part of the verse just quoted. He is the offerer of sacrifices, that is to say, of sacrifices of that kind which cannot be offered by each person for himself, but which require the intervention of some one specially qualified to offer them on the behalf of others. And taking the word *ιερεὺς* in this its most general signification, we find it applied in Scripture to the Levitical^b priesthood, and to that in which the Levitical priesthood at once culminated and expired, the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

The second, and most essential feature in the priest's office, and one which may exist quite apart from the performance by him of any sacrificial act, is that described in the former part of the verse above quoted. He is one solemnly set apart from his fellow men, and specially qualified to act as an exclusive channel of communication between them and God. He is the divinely appointed medium for their approach to God, and for the distribution of God's gifts to them. In a word, he is a *μεσότης*,

^b See the note at the conclusion of this volume, p. 154, on the Priesthood of Melchizedek.

or mediator, in the strictest sense of the term. And in this sense we find the word 'Mediator' applied in the New Testament, first to Moses as the divinely appointed channel of communication between God and the Israelites at the delivery of the law^c; and secondly, and emphatically, to Jesus Christ.

"Εἰς Θεός, εἰς καὶ μεσίτης Θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων ἄνθρωπος Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς^d."

"There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus."

But besides the above and stricter sense of *μεσίτης*, the etymology of the word suggests a far wider meaning. Etymologically the word *μεσίτης* may be made to stand for any person, and (except grammatically) for anything which helps to bring about any kind of communication or relation between one person or thing and another. And in this its widest meaning, it is applicable to all of those ministrations which were noticed in the first chapter of this work as capable of being rendered by one human being to another. Again, in a higher and somewhat more restricted sense, it will apply to each

^c Gal. iii. 19.

^d 1 Tim. ii. 5. Compare also Hebrews viii. 6, ix. 15, and xii. 24.

of those ministrations which help to introduce us to our new life in Jesus Christ, or to confirm us in it, or to restore us to it. The person at whose lips we first heard the name of Jesus Christ is a *μεσίτης* in this sense of the term. The Sacrament of Baptism, and the person who administers it, each forms an instance of *μεσιτεία* in this sense of the term. The person who makes intercession for another is a *μεσίτης* of the same kind, only at a higher degree of elevation. Whilst the example in which we find this kind of mediation attaining its highest pitch, is in the relation in which the whole of Christ's body the Church stands to each of the individual members which helps to compose it.

In thus extending, however, the meaning of the word *μεσίτης*, or 'mediator,' we must be very careful to guard against confusing this sense of it with the stricter sense of the term in which it is the equivalent of priest. Jesus Christ is our one Mediator as He is our one Priest. He is the one Being authorized and qualified to stand between us and God, to lift us into the presence of God, to bring God down to us. He interposes Himself between us and God at every single point, rather at every single point He offers to be-

come the means of our communication with His Father and our Father, His God and our God. His mediation is all-extensive, all-sufficient. The mediation which was rendered by the Jewish priesthood, whilst it differed from that of Jesus Christ in that it was restricted within comparatively narrow limits, and within those limits drew all its efficacy by anticipation from the mediation of Jesus Christ, yet so far resembled that of Jesus Christ, in that it required a special qualification for the purpose of exercising it. It was the exclusive inheritance of one of the twelve tribes of Israel, and within this one tribe it was confined to one single family. Accordingly, as applied to the family of Aaron, the word *μεσίτης*, 'mediator,' may be regarded as a strict equivalent of the word 'priest.'

The mediation which exists in the Christian Church, whilst it is restricted within comparatively narrow limits, and within these limits derives all its efficacy from the mediation of Jesus Christ, yet so far essentially differs from the mediation of the Jewish priesthood in that it requires no special qualification for the purpose of exercising it, and is confined as a matter of necessity to no one particular class.

If, on the one hand, the whole of the non-believing world is excluded from taking part in the exercise of the ministrations which lie within the Christian circle; so, on the other hand, every believer is possessed of all the essential qualifications requisite for exercising them, and, even if he does not himself take an outwardly active share in the exercise of them, he freely and largely co-operates with those who do. Practically, therefore, the ministrations which lie within the Christian circle cannot any of them be said to require a special qualification for the exercise of them, or to be confined as a matter of necessity to any class or order of men. Consequently those acts of mediation which are rendered by Christians are none of them to be regarded as instances of mediation in that strict sense of the term in which it is equivalent to priesthood.

In addition to the strict meanings of the word 'priest' we have also to notice one or two metaphorical meanings of it. Thus in 1 Peter ii. 9 we read as follows:—

ὑμεῖς δὲ γένος ἐκλεκτόν, βασιλῆιον ἱεράτευμα, ἔθνος ἅγιον, λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν, κ.τ.λ.

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people," &c.

And in Rev. i. 6 we read :—

καὶ ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς βασιλείαν, ἱερεῖς τῷ Θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ.

“ And hath made us kings and priests to God and His Father.”

And if we turn to Exod. xix. 5, 6 we shall find exactly the same terms predicated of the whole Jewish nation, people and priests indifferently. Indeed, it is from this description, as applied in the first instance to the whole Jewish people, that the same description as applied to all Christians is borrowed*.

And in all these passages the word ‘king’ as well as the word ‘priest’ is used for the purpose of describing the elevation attained, first by the Jews and afterwards by Christians, above all the other nations or religions in the world; an elevation analogous to, but not really identical with the elevation of the king or priest above

* That the passage (Exod. xix. 5, 6) is not simply prophetic, as has been asserted, of the Christian dispensation, is disproved by Deut. vii. 6 and xxvi. 18, where the Jewish nation is addressed as then actually realizing the description. And the same passages may also be referred to as disproving the assertion that the description applied to the Jews only before the appointment of the Levitical priesthood.

the tribe or people over which they respectively preside.

A somewhat different, though equally metaphorical meaning is observable in 1 Pet. ii. 5 :—

καὶ αὐτοὶ ὡς λίθοι ζῶντες οἰκοδομεῖσθε, οἶκος πνευματικός, ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον, ἀνενέγκαι πνευματικὰς θυσίας εὐπροσδέκτους Θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

It was observed at the beginning of this chapter that the most prominent meaning of the word ‘priest’ is that of sacrificer. At the same time it is essential to his office, as such, that the sacrifices which he offers are of a kind which cannot be offered by each person for himself.

Now here, in the passage before us, the single notion of sacrificing is dwelt on to the exclusion of the remaining and more essential part of the definition of priest in his capacity of sacrificer. Every Christian, says St. Peter, is qualified to offer up sacrifices, and those of the very highest kind, on his own behalf. And in his capacity of offerer of these sacrifices he is called a priest, though, inasmuch as he offers them not for others, but on his own account, he is not a

priest in the real meaning of the term, as, indeed, may be proved by the fact that the kind of sacrifices which he is here described as offering are such as might have been offered by every Jew during the whole period of the Levitical priesthood^f.

The exact nature of the sacrifices alluded to by St. Peter under the title of *πνευματικαί*, 'spiritual,' is best seen by turning to the parallel passages of Scripture, in which all Christians are exhorted to offer up the sacrifice of prayer and praise^g, and to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God^h.

And in the dedication of self in all its forms as embodied in our own Communion Service, we find an instance of the genuine Christian sacrifice which finds its spurious counterpart in the anti-scriptural sacrifice of the Mass.

Before closing this chapter, let us bestow a brief attention upon the word *λαϊκός*, 'layman,' which, as is shewn by the passage above quoted from Clemens Romanus, is at once correlative and opposed to the word *ιερεύς*, 'priest.'

Without at all objecting to the ordinary use

^f Ps. li. 17.^g Heb. xiii. 15.^h Rom. xii. 1.

of the word, we shall avoid many incorrect inferences which have been, and are liable to be, drawn from it, if we distinguish between its present signification and that which it possessed originally. As the position occupied by Jesus Christ corresponds to that occupied by the Levitical priesthood, so the position occupied by the Christian Church, bishops and elders included, corresponds to that originally occupied by the Jewish laity. Strictly speaking, therefore, the clergy are as much lay members of the Church as all the other members of it. They are on the same elevation as that occupied by the rest of the Church, though this elevation as far exceeds that occupied by the Jewish laity as the priesthood of Jesus Christ exceeds the Jewish priesthood.

CHAPTER XII.

PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES.

WE have now, in conclusion, briefly to enquire how far the celebration and administration of the Sacraments and other ordinances of the Church are practically affected by the conclusions at which we have arrived in the foregoing pages. And at first sight the extent to which they are so affected may appear very inconsiderable.

For there can be no question as to the propriety of ensuring a regular and becoming performance of these ordinances by committing them to the charge of a body of men set apart, so far as possible, for the purpose of performing them. Further, as we have grounds for regarding these ordinances as pertaining to the whole Church, and the Church herself as taking part in their performance through the instrumentality of her representatives, so it follows that it is only when administered by persons regularly authorized by the Church to act as her representatives, that these ordinances can be said to be regularly and lawfully performed.

But again, not only are we bound as a matter of order to confine these ministrations, so far as practicable, to a class of persons authorized by the Church, but we actually find such a class or order ready made to our hands in the *ἐπίσκοποι* (bishops) and *πρεσβύτεροι* (elders) of Scripture, and as such entitled, if not to actual submission, yet to submission so long as they restrict themselves within the limits of their office, as originally instituted and defined by Apostolical authority.

Of what use, however, it may perhaps be asked, is the theoretical denial of all the priestly claims advanced on behalf of this order, if the practical result of the denial is to leave the celebration and administration of the Sacraments and other ordinances of the Church as entirely in the hands of this class as if it alone was qualified to celebrate and administer them?

To this it may be replied, first, that cases of emergency occasionally arise when, in the absence of all persons of this class, the celebration and administration of the Church's ordinances must be either altogether suspended, or committed for a while to other than clerical hands. And although, when the emergency is likely to be of short duration, it may be best for the cause of

general order that these ordinances should be kept in abeyance, yet in the event of the emergency being prolonged to an indefinite period, a plain demand appears to be made for the exercise of that power which, however latent, is inherent in every portion of the Church, to authorize some of its number to act as its representatives in the celebration and administration of its ordinances.

And such an emergency may arise not only in the case of local separation, through accident, of a small body of believers from the rest of the community, but also in the case of the unwarrantable expulsion of a part of the Church by the main body, or in the case of the smaller portion feeling itself constrained to quit the communion of the main body in consequence of the latter committing itself to false and pernicious doctrines or practices.

And in the case of an unwarrantable expulsion of one portion of the Church by another, or in that of a warrantable departure of one from the other, it is most consolatory to feel that the smaller portion, even though destitute of any regularly ordained ministry at the time of its quitting or being cast forth by the larger body,

may yet fall back upon the reserve force of powers and privileges inherent in it as a portion of Christ's Body, for the purpose of making provision for the due performance of its ordinances by some of its own number.

Upon the question what constitutes a right, or rather the duty, of voluntary secession from the main body of the Church, it is unnecessary here to enter. It is enough to observe that as, on the one hand, the union of all Christians with each other is a point most emphatically insisted upon both by Jesus Christ and by His Apostles, so, on the other hand, the blessing even of unity may be purchased too dearly. Nay, from being a blessing at all, it may be converted into a curse.

Even if the presence of a regularly ordained clergy were essential to the celebration and administration of the Sacraments and other ordinances of the Church, still such is the proportion which truth and purity hold to everything else in the Christian system, that the case might plainly arise when it should become the imperative duty of the smaller body voluntarily to forego the benefit of all external ordinances rather than submit to be defiled by contact with

a portion, however large, of the Church which had become tainted with deadly error or impurity. How much more, then, when we have good ground for believing that no such loss need be the consequence of such a departure, may we suppose it possible for the occasion to arrive when it should become the duty of the smaller but purer portion of Christ's Body to go forth and renew the Church in its original freshness.

But now let us put aside these extreme cases of emergency, and let us consider how far the conclusions at which we have arrived have a tendency to affect our own Church, considered simply in itself and under its most ordinary circumstances.

And first, then, the view above taken of the relation which subsists between the clergy and the rest of the Church, though it need not alter the ministration of a single ordinance, could not fail, if properly realized, to impart a new tone to the feeling with which both the lay and the clerical portions of the Church regard themselves and each other.

It must surely make a vast difference whether the clergy are to be looked upon as the exclusive depositaries and channels of Divine blessings, or

simply as authorized instruments and representatives of a body homogeneous with themselves; whether, in short, they are to be looked upon as priests (*ιερείς*), or simply as the elder in a family of brothers*.

As the assumption of priestly power tends necessarily to make the clergy draw together into a separate class, so it as necessarily tends to make the laity regard them as a body antagonistic to themselves, rather than as fellow-members of one and the same body. And as it is this very assumption of priestly rank and authority that is at this moment alienating the minds and affections of hundreds of thousands from the Church of this country, so nothing can, under God's blessing, so tend to reconcile them to the Church as the renunciation by the clergy of this false position, and the frank acceptance by them of the position of *πρεσβύτερος* and *ἐπίσκοπος* (elder and bishop) as defined in Scripture.

Another point in which the conclusions at which we have arrived could not fail, if acquiesced

* Such appears to be the light in which the office of *πρεσβύτερος* (elder) is regarded by St. Peter in his first epistle, v. 1—5, where the remainder of the Church is addressed as *νεώτεροι* (younger).

in, to make themselves felt, is in the increased realization, by the lay portion of the Church, of the part taken by it in the performance of all the Christian ordinances. In the administration of Baptism, in the celebration of the Holy Communion, in every public service of prayer and praise, laymen would feel themselves interested not merely as bystanders or recipients, but as themselves no less real coefficients and coadjutors in the celebration and administration of these ordinances, than those who are outwardly most active in performing them.

Once, again, the conclusion at which we arrived in the ninth chapter respecting the decision of points of doctrine, may tend to remind laymen that it is their right and duty no less than it is of the clergy, to take part in the discussions on all questions which are from time to time raised in the Church, supposing, of course, that they have previously prepared themselves by a careful attention to the subject before them. And this is a point especially deserving of notice at the present time, when the right of laymen to be admitted to a share of the representation of the Church in Convocation and elsewhere, forms one of the popular subjects of discussion.

It should, however, be observed, that the extension of the powers and privileges of the Church to all its members is a very different thing from the extension of those powers and privileges to any who are not her members. Indeed, the more the true idea of the Church is realized, the more plainly will the one of these two extensions appear to be, not only different from, but absolutely incompatible with the other.

Let us, in conclusion, bestow a moment's notice on a subject which engrosses a very large share of public attention at the present day, the so-called Ritualism. It is impossible to deny that the revival of taste which forms one of the chief characteristics of the present generation, may be fairly regarded as calling for a more æsthetic mode of conducting our religious services, than that which suited the simpler though perhaps more strictly devotional feelings of our forefathers. On the other hand, the introduction of any ceremonial which has for its object the promotion of the sacrificial doctrine of the Eucharist, or which tends to fix attention on the part occupied by the officiator to the exclusion of that occupied by the whole congregation, is subversive of all Scriptural views, alike as re-

gards the Sacrament and those who celebrate it, and, as such, ought to be resisted by every legitimate means within the Church's power.

NOTE ON THE PRIESTHOOD OF MELCHIZEDECK, p. 137.

IN Hebrews vii. a comparison is drawn between the Priesthood of Jesus Christ and that of Melchizedeck (Gen. xiv. 18—20; compare Psalm cx. 4). But as it is in the accidental rather than in any essential features of Melchizedeck's office that his resemblance to Jesus Christ appears to consist, I have not thought it worth while to introduce any notice of it into the text of the chapter on the different meanings of 'priest.'

The following appear to be the chief points of resemblance : (1.) the combination in each of the regal and priestly power; see Heb. vii. 1. (2.) The identity or similarity between the titles and the seat of government of each; Heb. vii. 1, 2; compare Hengstenberg's Commentary on Psalm cx. 4. (3.) The indefinite duration of the life and office of Melchizedeck, which is regarded as typical of the everlasting duration of the priesthood of Jesus Christ; Heb. vii. 3; Psalm cx. 4. (4.) The distinction from, and superiority to, the Levitical priesthood, as exemplified in the payment of tithes to Melchizedeck by Abraham, the ancestor and representative of Levi; Heb. vii. 4—10.

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